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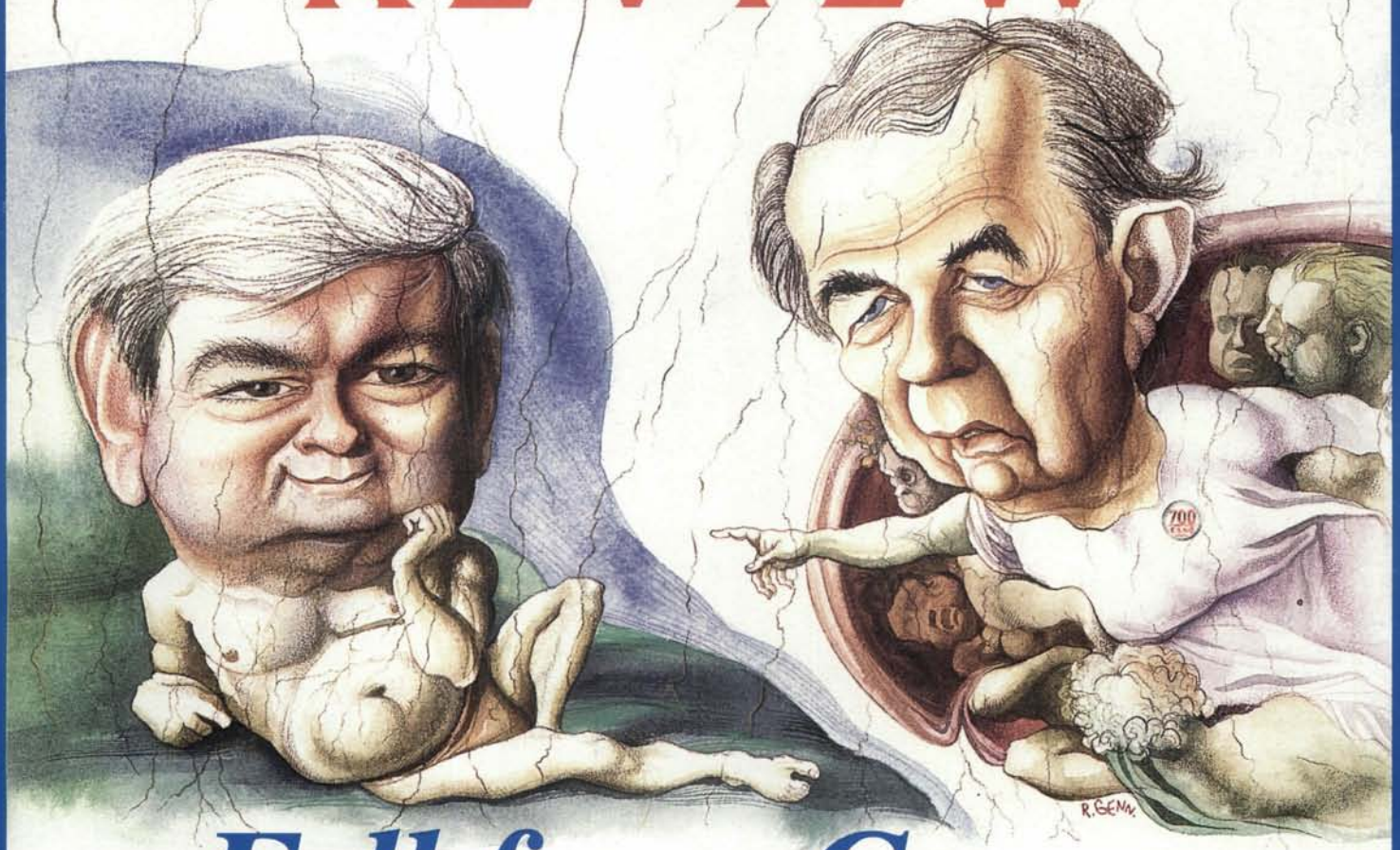
Mark Steyn on Robin Williams

David Bernstein: The End of Conservative Books?

NATIONAL REVIEW



Fall from Grace

Can the Religious Right Save the GOP—and Itself?

Ramesh Ponnuru • *Kathryn Jean Lopez* • *Joseph A. Barrett*

PLUS: Spring Books—*Danielle Crittenden* on Dr. Spock • *Jeffrey Hart* on The Shroud of Turin • *George J. Borjas* on

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NATIONAL REVIEW

MAY 18, 1998 VOL. L, NO. 9

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David Bernstein: The End of Conservative Books?
NATIONAL REVIEW
Fall from Grace
Can the Religious Right Save the GOP—and Itself?

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LETTERS

Back to Pat

So let me get this straight. Pat Buchanan, a conservative, writes a book, and other conservatives criticize it ["Pitched Battle," April 20]. Oh, boy—here we go again! David Brock redux.

Will Pat realize that all this time he has been nothing more than a tool of the radical Right? A right-wing hit man, perhaps? Will he write a mea culpa for *Esquire*? Will he apologize for the 1992 Republican convention? Gosh, the fun never stops here in the vast right-wing conspiracy!

Phillip Childress
Atlanta, Ga.

I was very disappointed to see you lambasting Pat Buchanan. Although some of your criticism is valid, I do not believe you give Mr. Buchanan the credit he deserves. I supported him in his last two presidential campaigns, not because I agree with everything he believes in, but because he believes. He is the only conservative on the national scene who holds strong conservative beliefs and sticks to them.

Mr. Buchanan is owed our gratitude, not our contempt. His contributions to the conservative movement are apparent. Take Steve Forbes. I believe that Mr. Buchanan's success in the 1996 primaries was a prime motivator in Mr. Forbes's transformation from a one-issue novelty candidate to a legitimate contender in 2000. Mr. Buchanan has been the only major Republican candidate who has consistently advocated the rights of the unborn. When will the rest of the party heed his message? I do not think that any Republican will be able to reconstruct Ronald Reagan's coalition of Republicans and working-class Democrats (largely Catholic) without a strong anti-abortion stance. Besides, it's the right thing to do. Mr. Forbes seems to have learned Pat's lesson; maybe some of the others will as well.

Caroline Feeney
Somerville, N.J.

Regarding the cover headline on the April 20 issue of *NR*: I have mounted a personal campaign against the pseudo-macho phrase "lock and load," which supposedly expresses the mindset of redneck gun nuts. Any knowledgeable gun owner would laugh at the idea of trying to load a firearm *after* the slide or bolt is locked against the breech.

As a former pistol-team member, I can tell you that the command on the target range is "load and lock," meaning chamber a round, set the safety, and point the weapon downrange in preparation for the signal to commence firing. It's not a war cry, but a procedure to guarantee order and safety at a target match.

NR has always defended the Second Amendment right of the people to keep and bear arms. Don't inadvertently give aid and comfort to the enemy.

Robert L. Rorschach
Tulsa, Okla.

"Lock and Load" is not our phrase but Mr. Buchanan's, used in a 1996 speech at the Heritage Foundation. —Ed.

Faulty Lawyers

The grammar in the quotation from MSNBC legal analyst Gerald Lefcourt ["MSNBC for the Defense," April 20] offers a clue to his immature and flawed reasoning. Anyone with a high-school diploma knows that a statement contrary to fact requires the subjunctive. His statement should have been worded, "If I *were* Clinton's attorney . . . "

Donald E. Waite
Williamston, Mich.

Byron York's otherwise excellent article on the legal talking heads that have sprouted like weeds on the cable chat shows left out one important fact: the talking heads are usually wrong on the law.

I was preparing to take the Texas bar exam when the Clinton–Lewinsky scandal broke. In the evenings, to escape from the complexities of torts and contracts, I would watch CNBC for an hour or two. I quickly discovered that watching the lawyers on these shows, especially Geraldo Rivera's self-righteous gabfest, was a great way to study. Almost without fail, whatever Geraldo (or one of his equally self-important guests) said was the state of the law, was wrong.

Watching *Rivera Live* became a game—I had to see how many misstatements of law there would be in an hour of the piously self-described "legal program of record." I didn't keep a precise tally, but I'm certain that the errors approached triple digits every time Vincent Bugliosi appeared. It's a miracle that Charlie Manson isn't a free man.

Christopher Burnett
Boulder, Colo.

Chutzpah

In drawing parallels between President Clinton and his advisors, and the Mafia ["Clinton the Chin," April 6], Michael Ledeen writes, "And just as real-life mafiosi often maintain Jewish consiglieri, so the Clintons have their Nussbaums, Landows, and Blumenthals."

Mr. Ledeen's remark, even if meant facetiously, is offensive. His comments imply that those involved in scandals seek the counsel of Jewish lawyers and advisors, who are presumably adept at handling such matters. The assumed religious identification of certain Administration officials should have no part in political criticism.

Abraham H. Foxman
Anti-Defamation League
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Foxman should be told that some lunatic is sending out letters over his signature. Mr. Foxman certainly knows the difference between smear and analysis, which the author of this letter does not. He would never make the preposterous charge that it's offensive to state the simple fact that the Clintons have a large number of Jewish advisors (only three of whom were listed in my article), as many real and fictional Mafia leaders have had. And Mr. Foxman, of all people, would never have the chutzpah to accuse me of offending Jews after he remained silent while I and other Jewish officials of the Reagan Administration were accused of dual loyalty and even acting as "second Pollards" during the Iran–Contra investigations. —ML

May She Rest in Peace

I like to think we conservatives, and *NR* in particular, are notable for honoring the traditional virtues. But your note on Bella Abzug's demise ["The Week," April 20] falls short of the standard of gentility. Good men don't gloat over the death of their enemies. Calling a dead woman "grotesque . . . an affront," and saying, "She will not be missed," is invective for sheer pleasure, void of purpose. Have we run out of living opponents? Mind your manners.

Mark Thompson
Chicago, Ill.

Hope They're Not Reading

I laughed so hard at Richard Lowry's "Clinton Confesses" [April 6]—until I began thinking that if the White House spinsters read this delightful piece, I truly believe they would use it as their defense. It really does sound just like something this Administration would do—and unfortunately something the American public would probably love.

Diana Townley
Sacramento, Calif.

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people in motion

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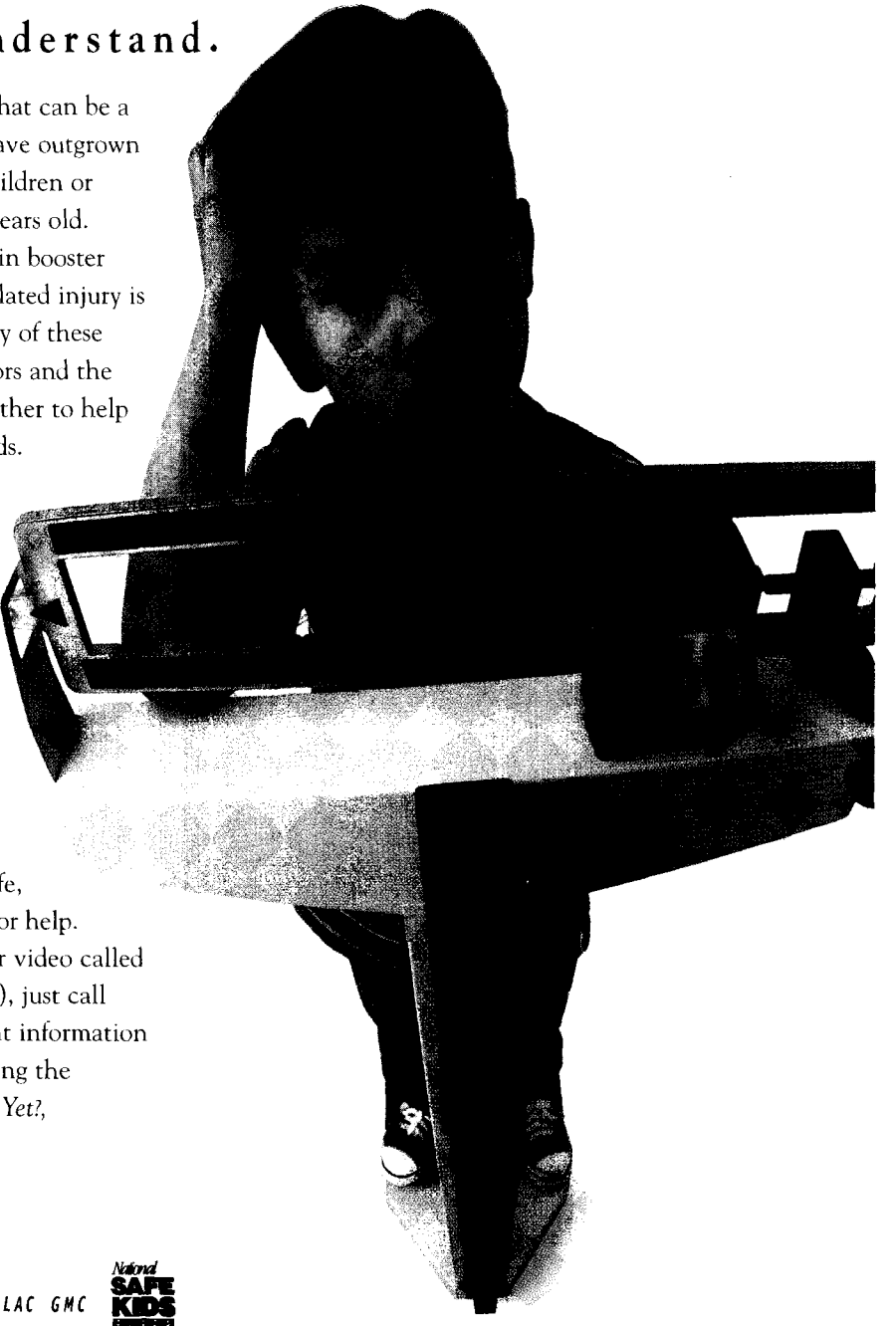

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May 18 issue; printed April 29

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FROM THE EDITOR

The Clinton Carnival

NATIONAL REVIEW had several tables at this year's White House Correspondents' Dinner, the annual Washington schmoozefest with a black-tie crowd of two-thousand-some journalists, politicos, and celebrities bused in specially for the occasion.

The event demonstrates how dim is the candlepower of Washington celebrities, compared to the real thing. I saw White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles wandering unnoticed among the tables, while others checked to see where Sharon Stone and *Seinfeld*'s Kramer (Michael Richards) were sitting.

This year the biggest star was Paula Jones, the guest of *Insight* magazine. People lined up beforehand to see her make her entrance. The last time Paula Jones was in the same hotel with Bill Clinton, of course, love was in the air.

This time she seemed to enjoy herself more, basking in the bizarre glory of having received the crudest pass in presidential history. Well after midnight, Mrs. Jones, by that time holding a glass of white wine at a risky angle, was still being passed from group to group for pictures, the sideshow in Washington's carnival of scandal.

■ A special feature of the dinner during this Administration is that it has given the President an opportunity every year to make light of his latest abuses of his office. Last year, he joked that Chelsea's going away to college opened up another bedroom for rent.

This year he didn't address Monicagate directly; he just took some shots at the press, and in one long riff made mock apologies in the vein of his slavery mea culpa in Africa. Watching the latter was somehow dizzying; here was President Clinton playing President Clinton, most of whose empathy in real life is put on anyway. The layers of acting never end.

One Clinton line should serve as a warning to Republicans. He suggested that Congress might be an appropriate replacement for *Seinfeld*, because it too is about nothing. The White House is beginning to test the "Do Nothing Congress" line in preparation for a serious push to take back control of the House in November.

Elsewhere in this issue (page 22), Kate O'Beirne argues that Congress is much stronger than anyone, even the congressional leadership itself, realizes. All the more reason not to get pushed into "doing something," such as trying to bankrupt the tobacco companies.

■ The GOP can lose the House only if its base is dispirited and doesn't turn out to vote. A critical part of that base is the Christian Right, which, as Ramesh Ponnuru discusses in his cover story (page 40), is especially restive these days. Ramesh argues that the marriage between the GOP and the social conservatives *can* be saved, but it will take some counseling.

Ramesh has recently published in *NR* an excellent analysis of Clintonism ("Clinton Forever," March 23) and an important piece on the tax-reform debate ("Breaking the Code," March 9). He gives advice to the GOP and the conservative movement as cogent as anything else around. And, at age 23, Ramesh Ponnuru is just getting started.

■ Just getting started as an *NR* senior editor is David Klinghoffer, age 32, *NR*'s literary editor for the last six years. David has the enviable ability to write charmingly about anything short of nuclear war.

He has written for *NR* about his name showing up in graffiti, about his hypochondria, and, more recently, about Toni Morrison and the TV show *South Park*.

We joke around the office about how for David almost everything is a sign of "cultural decay." As long as he writes about it . . .

■ Our friends at *The Weekly Standard* predict President Clinton will be gone in a year. That seems close—he'll be gone in two and a half years.

—RICHARD LOWRY

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FOR THE RECORD

■ NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll: President **Clinton** approval rating at 66 per cent, but 64 per cent "do not respect" him. . . . CBS/*USA Today* poll: 60 per cent believe Clinton "definitely" or "probably" lied under oath while President. . . . Clinton earns $76 in residual payments for playing saxophone on TV in 1992. . . . Vehicle in Clinton entourage runs over woodchuck on Earth Day in Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

■ NBC/*WSJ* poll: Texas Gov. **George W. Bush** (R.) leads VP **Al Gore** 44 to 41 per cent, also reverses gender gap. . . . If Bush wins nomination and chooses Gov. **George Pataki** (R., N.Y.) as running-mate, says **Pat Buchanan**, "you'll get a third party." . . . To CNN's **Judy Woodruff**, Buchanan responds to criticisms from Right: "The folks at NATIONAL REVIEW and the folks at *The Weekly Standard* march under a conservative banner. Their passports are forged, Judy. They have embraced a free-trade ideology that goes back to **FDR**, and **Cordell Hull**, and **Woodrow Wilson**, to nineteenth-century folks whom **Spiro Agnew** would have called radical liberals.". . . . **Pat Robertson** gives $10,000 to PAC of Sen. **John Ashcroft** (R., Mo.), says: "I like to help good men and he's a good man." . . . Shades of **Jimmy Carter**: **Lamar Alexander** introduces "moral misery index." . . . **Jesse Jackson** ponders new run for White House. . . . In speculative N.J. poll, Sen. **Frank Lautenberg** (D.) defeats Gov. **Christine Todd Whitman** (R.) for Senate seat in 2000 by one point. . . . New York City mayor **Rudy Giuliani** (R.) speaks on behalf of Sen. **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** (D., N.Y.) at fundraiser.

■ Sen. **Barbara Boxer** (D., Calif.) is only incumbent with smaller war chest than challenger. **Darrell Issa**, seeking GOP nomination, has more campaign funds, according to FEC report. . . . Prop. 209 champion **Ward Connerly** endorses Issa. . . . California gubernatorial candidate **Al Checchi** (D.) on why his kids don't attend public schools: "I'm not going to sacrifice my children's future." But refuses to support school choice. . . . Rep. **Jane Harman** (D., Calif.), also running for governor, on what she would like her tombstone to say: "She really listened, and she really cared about being a good mother." . . . Elementary-school principal apologizes to Sen. **Ben Nighthorse Campbell** (R., Colo.) after students attend Sierra Club rally attacking Campbell. Teachers thought it was Earth Day program on endangered species, accuse Sierra Club of misleading them. . . . Michigan Gov. **John Engler** (R.) calls on **Jack Kevorkian**'s lawyer **Geoffrey Fieger**, seeking Democratic gubernatorial nomination, to apologize for describing **Jesus Christ** as "just some goofball who got nailed to the cross."

■ CNN/*USA Today* poll: 58 per cent consider GOP Congress a "success," and 56 per cent say most House members deserve re-election. . . . **Christina F. Jeffrey**, former Historian of the House, both hired and fired by **Newt Gingrich**, says she wants his seat. . . . Former pro wrestler **Jesse Ventura** runs for Minnesota governor on Reform Party ticket. . . . Georgia Democrats lose top-ranking colleague in State Senate, as President Pro Tempore **Sonny Perdue** switches to GOP.

■ **Jane Fonda** apologizes for telling United Nations group that parts of Georgia resemble Third World country because of "tar-paper shacks" and children "starving to death." . . . Surgeon General **David Satcher** plans to address teen pregnancy by discussing "the importance of sex and the beauty of sex." . . . Delaware driver's licenses to identify sex offenders. . . . Georgia health officials estimate welfare cap has produced 32 per cent fewer births among welfare mothers in state. . . . Children's Educational Opportunity America Foundation pledges $50 million to fund private school-voucher program in San Antonio, aiding roughly 14,000 students in city's poorest district. Nationwide, children enrolled in non-public schools increase 43 per cent since 1990, with biggest gains in home schooling.

"Some see the glass as half empty, some see it as half full— I see it as taxable."

■ *Village Voice* prints classified ad for pair of vocalists: "Must be dedicated, creative, not afraid to offend everyone and anyone. NO CHRISTIANS." Catholic League telephones to place similar ad announcing "NO GAYS" and is turned down. . . . Disney CEO **Michael Eisner** criticizes Southern Baptists for attempts to convert Jews: "That was something that hasn't been recommended since the Forties in Europe," he says on *Today* show. . . . Survey: 6 per cent of doctors admit past participation in assisted suicide. . . . **Eugene D. Genovese** forms The Historical Society, group of historians fighting "politicization and trivialization" in their profession (P.O. Box 38915, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104-8915). . . . Young America's Foundation acquires **Reagan** ranch near Santa Barbara, Calif., as site for leadership training of high-school and college students. . . . Air-conditioning to be installed at **George Washington**'s home at Mount Vernon.

■ In ranking of Britain's richest, Queen **Elizabeth II** drops to 94th place. . . . North Korea permits planes traveling to and from Seoul to fly in its airspace, saving airlines estimated $125 million in fuel. . . . **Kofi Annan** hits Hollywood celeb circuit to drum up support for UN; appoints **Magic Johnson** Messenger of Peace. . . . Pope **John Paul II** to visit St. Louis, Mo., in January.

■ Funeral-home director **Ken Cooper** runs for coroner in Campbell County, Ky., as Democrat, publishes advertisement announcing he is "the pro-life candidate."

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THE WEEK

■ The war-crimes trial of Pol Pot has been moved to a higher court.

■ The very latest Clinton scandal has the word "treason" on some lips in Washington. The Pentagon had concluded that in 1996 Loral Space and Communications and Hughes Electronics put U.S. national security at risk when they shared satellite-guidance technology with China. In February, the Clinton Administration in effect spiked the resulting investigations by approving a waiver for Loral to provide China with the same sort of sensitive rocket guidance information it had provided without authorization in 1996. Loral and Hughes find it cheaper to launch satellites from China, with its heavily subsidized rockets. But the Chinese rockets have—until now, at least—been highly unreliable. The systems the companies provided could help China launch weather satellites—or warheads. Why is the Administration running interference for China's corporate enablers? One clue: Since 1991, according to the *New York Times*, the two companies have given $2.5 million to Democratic candidates and causes. Loral CEO Bernard Schwartz last year was the top individual soft-money contributor to the Democratic National Committee. Money well spent, it seems.

■ More bad news for the current leadership of the Teamsters, the union so corrupt that Jimmy P. Hoffa, son of the infamous Jimmy Hoffa, is the good guy. Federal watchdogs have determined that Hoffa cheated in the 1996 race for the union's presidency, but not enough to be disqualified. His opponent, "reformer" Ron Carey, flat-out stole the election and *has* been disqualified. Hoffa—more conservative than his enemies within the union—is thus the favorite to be its next president. The apparatchiks in the Teamsters' "Marble Palace" headquarters in Washington, D.C., might begin currying favor with the heir apparent by cooperating with the on-going investigations of Carey by Congress and a federal election monitor. Also feeling the heat is the Teamsters' political director, William Hamilton, who has just been indicted on six scandal-related counts and may yet sing about the possible involvement of the Democratic National Committee, the White House, and John Sweeney's AFL-CIO in the Carey money-laundering operation. Whoever is next in the dock, the Teamsters union will not be an arm of the DNC come November's election. Long live Jimmy Hoffa.

■ By signing a discharge petition to force a floor debate on campaign finance, a dozen House Republicans effectively voted to yank the Speaker's gavel from Newt Gingrich and hand it to Dick Gephardt. The GOP leadership had no choice but to cave in and agree to bring to the floor—yet again—a campaign-finance bill that would ban soft money and curb issue-advocacy ads. The renegades included the usual suspects, such as Christopher Shays (Conn.) and Connie Morella (Md.), as well as those easily intimidated by the press, such as Tom Davis (Va.) and Frank Wolf (Va.), joined by self-styled populists like Zach Wamp (Tenn.). Their poll-tested, media-pandering "courage" means the congressional GOP will have to march through another series of politically difficult votes to beat back campaign- finance rules that run counter to its partisan interests and are unconstitutional to boot. The internal GOP disarray is reminiscent of the condition of the House Democrats as their leadership began to lose its grip in 1994. Gephardt may yet be able to look back at this moment as the beginning of the end of the Gingrich Speakership.

■ The Secret Service has protected Presidents from bodily harm since the turn of the century. Now the Clinton Administration wants the Service to protect it from legal and political harm too. In the Lewinsky case, the Justice and Treasury Departments are asserting a previously unheard-of "protective-function privilege" that would allow agents to refuse to appear as witnesses in a criminal proceeding. Of course, no agent should ever be compelled (or even permitted) to talk gratuitously about an official's embarrassing personal conduct, but as law-enforcement officers they have a duty to provide evidence in a criminal case. If agents can provide eyewitness testimony that the President was alone in his office with Miss Lewinsky, it would be evidence relating to perjury—which, one must always remind this Administration, is a crime. The President's latest attempt to obstruct Kenneth Starr's investigation would transform the Secret Service into a palace guard, loyal only to its sovereign—and his consorts.

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■ All is not bleak for congressional Republicans. In the Senate, they racked up a string of victories on education—not just by passing the education savings accounts proposed by Sen. Paul Coverdell (R., Ga.), but also by defeating supposedly unstoppable amendments to finance school construction and hire new teachers. Sen. Tim Hutchinson (R., Ark.) and others boldly made the case, backed by the evidence if not the polls, that smaller class sizes do not lead to higher educational achievement. Sen. Robert Byrd (D., W.Va.), for one, was persuaded: "I have been voting for education funding for decades, but American students are still mired in mediocrity. This is a new approach and is entitled to be tested." Liberal critics were reduced to carping that the Coverdell proposal is paltry, which is not something they typically say about tax cuts. Fine; expand the savings accounts later. In the meantime, President Clinton can explain why parents schooling their children as they see fit do not deserve even paltry tax relief.

■ A lot of pro-life Republicans held their noses and campaigned for New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman's re-election last fall. But only one went back to press the state legislature to overturn her veto of a ban on partial-birth abortion: Steve Forbes. It's the kind of gutsy move that has more and more social conservatives giving him a second look. Pat Robertson invited Forbes to his office in early April, and Jesse Helms remarked at a National Right to Life Committee dinner that Forbes would make a good President. When Dana Milbank of *The New Republic* asked Forbes which he would choose if he could either outlaw abortion or cut taxes, but not both, Forbes picked the former—and held his ground on *Meet the Press*: "The Declaration of Independence says, 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' Life comes first." Southern Baptist Convention official Richard Land says, "Answers like that build credibility fast." It's unlikely that Forbes will be the favorite of social conservatives in 2000, but he will almost certainly have strong support. Economic and social conservatives can get along—especially when, as in the case of Steve Forbes, they're the same people.

■ The Pro-Life Action League and Operation Rescue were recently convicted under the Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO)—a law designed to prosecute Cosa Nostra crime families and their associates—for picketing outside abortion clinics. The two organizations will be forced to pay $86,000 to the National Organization for Women, which brought the lawsuit, and will now face demands from clinics around the country to pay their security costs. Neither group has ever been linked to clinic bombings or murders, despite NOW's strained attempts to do so. The jury found nonetheless that their picketing, "harassment," chanting, and occasional trespassing and shoving over the course of ten years had created a sense of "coercion, fear, and intimidation" and made them "criminal enterprises" engaged in a conspiracy to "restrain interstate commerce" in abortion. *Legal* harassment is apparently okay: NOW gained access to the financial records and correspondence of the defendants and deposed countless individuals associated with other pro-life groups. The ACLU, so quick to find "chilling effects" on free expression when it comes to lap dancing, Nazi marches, and portrayals of bestiality, is unconcerned by the verdict. Yet once RICO is deployed in this fashion why shouldn't it be used against the anti-logging and animal-rights movements? Anti-smokers conspire to restrain interstate commerce in cigarettes and abridge tobacco companies' free-speech rights. As with the independent-counsel law, RICO's unfairness and constitutional defects will be widely recognized only when liberals are its target.

■ Sen. Spencer Abraham (R., Mich.) and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R., Fla.) are sponsoring legislation—the Child Custody Protection Act of 1998—that would make it a federal offense to transport a minor across state lines in order to circumvent a state's parental-consent law. Twenty-two states demand the consent, or at least the notification, of a parent (or authorization by a judge) before a teenager can obtain an abortion. In opposition stands the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, which is defending a Pennsylvania woman who brought a 13-year-old girl, impregnated by the woman's 19-year-old stepson, to New York for an abortion. The CRLP argues that the defendant merely "assisted a woman to exercise her constitutional rights." Pennsylvania prosecutors, more old-fashioned, call it something else: "corruption of a minor."

■ O'Sullivan's First Law holds that any group which is not explicitly right-wing will drift to the left. Latest case in point: the National Academy of Sciences, which blasted a petition signed by 15,000 scientists skeptical of global warming. The skeptics included no prominent scientists, sniffed one critic, which, if true, reflects badly on the NAS, since the petition was circulated by Frederick Seitz, a past president of that organization. Meanwhile, a corollary to O'Sullivan's Law—that efforts to tug left-wing groups to the right always end in failure—was illustrated by a vote of Sierra Club members to remain silent on the need for reduced immigration. Now the club can "get back to our real work," said executive director Carl Pope, which includes "support for international family planning." (Abortions in China are apparently good for the Sierras.) Another sign that environmentalists will stay PC until the ice caps melt.

■ New York City's commercial-rent tax on all businesses that pay more than $100,000 a year in rent is due to expire. But Mayor Rudolph Giuliani wants to build a new Yankee Stadium, and so he proposes to preserve the tax (although at a lower rate) to fund the construction. The mayor massages the issue by suggesting the tax is being "phased out more slowly." Oh, and by the way, after The House That Rudy Built is completed, the mayor wants to

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keep the tax a while longer to fund football and soccer stadiums. In other words, the commercial-rent tax will be "phased out" when New York City elects a mayor who can be taken at his word.

■ For the first time in nearly four years in office, New York governor George Pataki has unsheathed his line-item veto. He disposed of more than a thousand items added to his budget proposal by the profligate New York State legislature, including about $750 million worth of election-year pork. Overrides seem unlikely. And the new budget is the first since Nelson Rockefeller's administration to come in under the original proposal. But the original proposal included the biggest spending hike in a decade and minimal tax relief. Pataki's vetoes are a scalpel, applied to a budget that needs an axe.

■ Sergei Kiriyenko was finally, on the third try, approved by the Duma as prime minister of Russia—no doubt in part because if the Duma had rejected him three times, President Yeltsin could have dissolved it and called new elections. The Communists, Kiriyenko's (read: Yeltsin's) main opponents in this skirmish, were beaten soundly. But Kiriyenko is young and inexperienced, and his chances of governing effectively will be complicated by all the maneuvering for the presidential election in 2000. Viktor Chernomyrdin, recently sacked by Yeltsin as prime minister, is an announced candidate, as is Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov. Gen. Aleksandr Lebed is strongly favored to be elected governor of the huge Krasnoyarsk region (he led by a big margin in the first round); he also has presidential ambitions. Though Yeltsin has stopped hinting that he may fiddle with the constitution to allow himself a third term, the possibility is still there. Kiriyenko will have to push for reform—and watch his back.

■ James Earl Ray, loser, career criminal, and jailbreak artist, went to his reward, thirty years after winning a place in history by killing the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. But in the last years of his life he accomplished something as noxious in its own way: fortifying the faith of the lazy-minded in conspiracy theories. Ray had retracted his guilty plea in King's death days after making it, and by the end King's family had come to believe that he was a pawn in some vast plot. But Ray's stories were neither consistent nor credible. The supposed South American mastermind, Raul, identified by Ray from a photograph, turned out to be a New Yorker who had never been to Tennessee, where King was murdered. Capt. Billy R. Eidson, named by Ray's lawyer as the late leader of a team of Green Beret snipers, was very much alive, and outraged at the smear. People believe such bedtime stories because they are unwilling to admit that great events can be effected by chance, by motiveless malignity, or by two-bit crooks—like James Earl Ray.

■ Bopping around the Internet is the job application of Manfred Mickleson, a would-be professor of eighteenth-century literature. Mr. Mickleson's dissertation, "informed by feminist theory, queer theory, cultural materialism, eco-criticism, and postcolonial studies," focuses on "masculine authority and feminine desire in eighteenth-century pirate literature," beginning with Daniel Defoe. On and on it goes, an anthology of modern scholarly clichés—not surprisingly, since the letter, and Mickleson himself, were made up by academic hoaxsters. This did not prevent Mickleson from getting six invitations to be interviewed at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association. Unless of course the supposed invitations are part of the hoax.

■ Currently back on Broadway, whence she was summoned four and a half years ago to head the National Endowment for the Arts, is Jane Alexander—or "Alexander the Great," as she is known at the *Washington Post*. In a glowing Arts-section profile, Miss Alexander explained how she represented "John Q. Public"—you know, the guy who appreciates some good performance art with his six-pack—in her fights for the agency that is perpetually "embattled" but never actually killed. Miss Alexander says, "What was so frustrating for me was that I couldn't understand where the agency's enemies were coming from—except from a purely political point of view or a non-educated point of view. Maybe it was both." Or maybe John Q. can think of better uses for his tax money than much of what the NEA funds.

■ Michael Moore is an aggressively left-wing, anti-corporate filmmaker (*Roger & Me*) who delights in calling himself a mere "shlub from Flint [Michigan]," a real "working-class guy"—who just happens to reside in a $1.3-million apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side. His latest film, *The Big One*, follows Moore on a promotional tour for his book, *Downsize This!*, in which he labels Nike CEO Phil Knight America's "Corporate Crook #3." In *The Big One* Moore shows himself hectoring Knight in an interview for exploiting underaged Indonesian factory workers. But Nike kept a tape of the encounter and posted some revealing outtakes on its website. When not hectoring, Moore can be heard assuring Knight that "I honestly think you're the good guy. I honestly think that Nike

Down Home with Trent Lott

Some fret about the levee,
And some, the killer bees.
The weather is a topic,
Along with Aunt Maud's peas.
Fish farmers haggle over feed,
But no one stops to dish the weed.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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Big Taxes, Big Government
There They Go Again...

Washington is going haywire again, and pursuing its old agenda of tax and spend, without worrying about the consequences.

Congress is considering a huge new tax increase, new expansion of government, and unprecedented infringement on personal liberty.

Politics has transformed a tobacco resolution, which was a historic opportunity to change the tobacco industry and reduce underage use of tobacco products, into the following:

- A $500,000,000,000 tax increase – half a trillion dollars – with the majority of it falling on people who make $30,000 a year or less.
- New government spending – this new tax will be placed in a fund to pay for tax cuts for the rich, and new federal spending.
- The price of cigarettes rising to $5 a pack – $50 for a carton of cigarettes.
- A black market for tobacco products, with unregulated access to children.
- Jobs at risk – hundreds of thousands of jobs – not only in the tobacco industry, but among farmers, retailers and small businesses.

Think about it: In a time when we have a budget surplus of up to $75 billion, a huge new tax increase to fund more federal spending. The era of big government is supposed to be over, but Washington wants to create 17 new bureaucracies, and give unelected federal bureaucrats the power to ban tobacco products.

Washington may say it's just punishing the tobacco industry, but it's also really hurting the American people, and jeopardizing the fundamental principles of limited government and personal freedom. You don't have to like tobacco companies to think there's something really wrong with Washington's approach.

If you're concerned where Washington is headed, call 1-800-343-3222.

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is the good guy here; you're not General Motors." Latest downsizing victim: Michael Moore's pretensions.

■ *The Object of My Affection* is the first film we are aware of that seeks to illustrate the new definition of a family: that is, any voluntary grouping of people, of whatever biological or sexual relationship, often, but not necessarily, sharing a common utility bill. Jennifer Aniston stars as Nina, a lonely-hearted heterosexual social worker who gets pregnant by her uncouth hetero boyfriend but falls in love with a lonely-hearted homosexual schoolteacher who is also her roommate, and asks him to help her raise her baby. Humorous complications arise, but by the end of the movie (sorry to kill the suspense for you) everyone has settled happily into "family" groupings: The uncouth hetero father has plunked down with a female colleague of the homosexual ex-roommate, who is now shacked up with a gay actor. A sensitive black cop who entered the story at one point is now raising his niece and nephew as his own kids. Nina is raising her little girl with the help of all of the above, who, however, live elsewhere. And so on. "We can make this up ourselves," says Nina. "None of the old rules apply!" Who says Hollywood is anti-family?

■ Acting on behalf of several hundred Rutgers alumni, Milton Friedman has taken out an ad in the student newspaper opposing Rutgers's plans to go big-time in intercollegiate football. He declares that universities do not "exist . . . to provide entertainment for spectators or employment for athletes." Alas, even world-class universities such as Stanford, Michigan, and Notre Dame stage spectacles in which the players are not really students at all. They live separately, take very few courses, and are heavily "tutored." Few of these athletes will ever get near the NFL without buying a ticket, but neither will they get a BA worth having. The big state universities probably no longer have a real choice, since the legislators who fund them are more interested in football than microbiology. But Rutgers can take Mr. Friedman's advice, and let actual students play football.

Feeding the President

The Chinese, who excel at drips
That hit a victim's brow
With cruel regularity
Until the weak kowtow,
Feed Mr. Clinton tidbits that
Massage the missile trade;
Wang Dan, cleaned up for first-class flight,
Required some first aid.

—W. H. von Dreele

■ Lenoria Y. Walker, affirmative-action director for the city of Houston, quit her job in disgrace after being suspended without pay by Mayor Lee P. Brown for demeaning a city councilman. The city councilman is a dwarf, but Miss Walker referred to him lightheartedly as a "midget." (Gasp.) Mayor Brown is of course the former New York City police commissioner who didn't get worked up when anti-Semitic blacks rampaged through the city's Crown Heights district in 1991 and killed a young Jew. But even Lee P. Brown knows you have to draw the line *somewhere*.

■ "Amy is the girl next door," said Amy Grossberg's lawyer, when she pleaded guilty to driving with her high-school lover, Brian Peterson, to a Delaware motel where their baby was born, then thrown into a dumpster. "This is the kind of girl you have as your baby-sitter." Maybe for your baby, though clearly not for hers.

■ Researchers have discovered, God knows how, that Prozac gets mussels and clams in a lovey-dovey mood. Life hasn't been the same since science discovered government research grants.

■ The Media Research Center reports that CNN president Rick Kaplan recently admitted that it was a big mistake to have repeatedly aired exclusive footage of the now-infamous hug between President Clinton and a beret-wearing Monica Lewinsky. "Clinton probably gave 79 other hugs on that line," says a contrite Mr. Kaplan. We are still waiting for the other 79 interns to come forward and tell their stories.

Pol Pot's Afterlife

WOULD that the death of Pol Pot were an occasion for unmixed joy. From 1975 to 1978, his Khmer Rouge regime oversaw the massacre of between one and three million of his fellow Cambodians. His genocide, as horrific as those of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, is one of the reasons history will shudder at this century of totalitarian evil. Pol Pot's goals, like those of his predecessors, were ideological. Cambodia was to become the site of a Marxist utopia that could be built only after the destruction of everything that had come before—including, in the final efflorescence of Pol Pot's reign, every Cambodian over the age of 13.

But Pol Pot's responsibility for his crimes is being obscured in death as it was in life by the incorrigible habit of some on the Left of blaming the United States for the killing fields. The thesis here is that the U.S. destabilized Cambodia in the early 1970s by attacking North Vietnamese bases on Cambodian soil, and also that the American bombing "radicalized" the theretofore-pacific Khmer Rouge.

This is pure fantasy, as is the notion that North Vietnam is the hero in this story for finally toppling Pol

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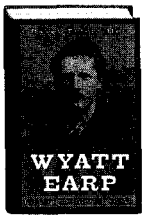

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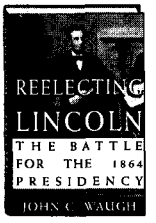

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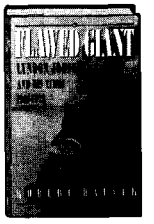

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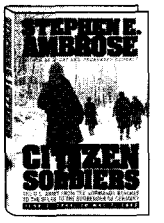

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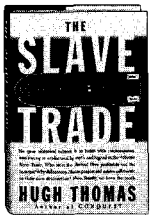

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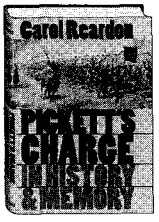

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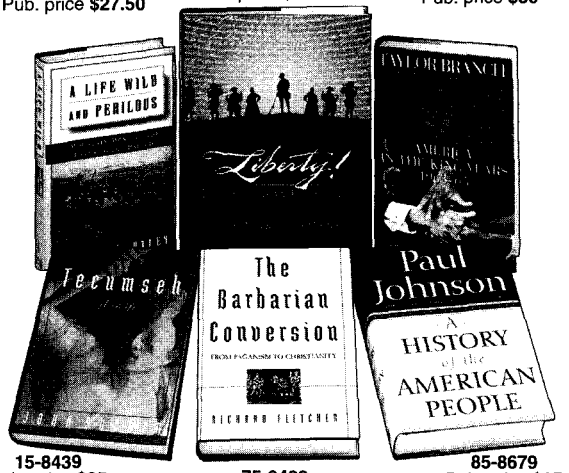

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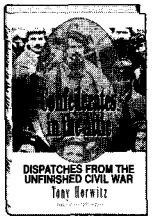

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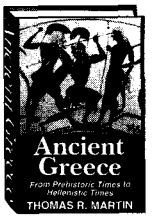

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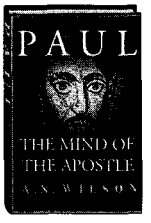

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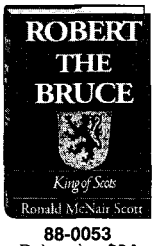

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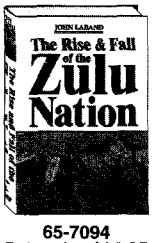

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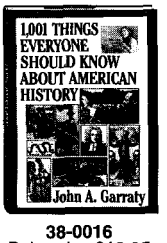

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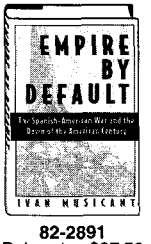

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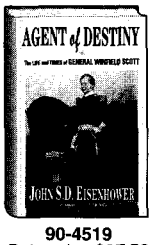

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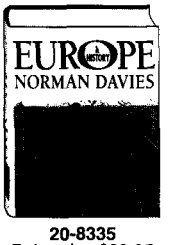

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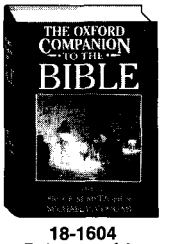

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Pot. It was the North Vietnamese who built up the Khmer Rouge in the first place as their allies against the United States. And the Khmer Rouge espoused their maniacal Maoist vision long before any U.S. involvement. It was American leaders (Nixon, Ford, Kissinger) who struggled to save Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge onslaught.

If America is to be blamed, it should be for the decision of its Democratic Congress to bar even the shipment of supplies to the government Pol Pot defeated. That outcome was encouraged by journalists, like the *New York Times*'s Sydney Schanberg, who were writing articles with headlines like "Indochina without Americans: For Most, a Better Life?" The *Times*'s columnist Anthony Lewis opined, "What future could possibly be more terrible than the reality of what is happening to Cambodia now?" Even as that future became clear, some leftists like Noam Chomsky tried to deny it.

Pol Pot's legacy lives on in Cambodia. Hun Sen, a former associate whom North Vietnam first installed in power in 1978, overthrew a democratically elected government last year. The Khmer Rouge, thank God, are now a spent force. But all the attention given to them—including discussion of putting their leaders on trial for crimes against humanity—is useful to Hun Sen: it distracts attention from his rigging of the new election set for July. Many ghosts haunt Cambodia—including, now, the ghost of the man who caused most of its suffering.

A Surplus of Taxes

THERE is good news and bad news on the budget front. The good news: this year will be the first time since Lyndon Johnson's Presidency that the fiscal year has ended in the black. When the Republicans took over Congress in 1994, they inherited $200-billion deficits for as far as the eye could see. Their promise to balance the budget in seven years was widely regarded as unrealistic. As it happened, they helped produce a $50-billion surplus in three. Newt Gingrich and Trent Lott, take a bow.

The bad news: the budget is being balanced not by federal retrenchment but by higher taxes. The latest Treasury Department report indicates that for the first six months of fiscal year 1998, tax receipts are up 10 per cent over last year. (As proponents predicted, capital-gains tax cuts are contributing to increased revenues.) From 1998 to 2002, tax collections will now be roughly $500 billion higher than projected in last year's budget agreement. Yet this new tax windfall has not emboldened GOP tax cutters. Last month the Senate considered a tax cut so microscopic that, as Sen. John Ashcroft (R., Mo.) calculates it, the typical family would be able to afford a Big Mac with each month's $1.87 savings.

Big spenders in both parties have shown no such timidity. Their plans for new health-care programs, federal day-care subsidies, federalization of the schools, and highway pork projects in every district can be fended off only by taking the money out of their hands. Congress should return at least half the windfall—$250 billion over five years—to the taxpayers who produced it.

There is no shortage of possible tax cuts on offer. Simplifying the capital-gains tax, making the cost of medical insurance deductible for individuals as it now is only for companies, expanding the 15 per cent tax bracket, and eliminating the marriage penalty are all options. Any of them would be preferable to the status quo, but some have strategic advantages over others.

A major factor driving the Federal Government's current growth is real-income bracket creep. Because of the steep progressivity of the income tax, economic expansion pushes more and more American families into higher brackets each year. Over the past three years revenues have been climbing nearly twice as fast as wages and income. Moving most middle-income workers from the 28 per cent to the 15 per cent tax bracket, as proposed by Lawrence Kudlow and Stephen Moore in these pages, would roll back these unlegislated tax increases. (It would also reduce the marriage penalty.) Such increases should be blocked in the future as well, as Milton Friedman suggests, by indexing tax brackets for real income growth in addition to inflation.

These moves should be combined with measures to promote investment, thus expanding the constituency for further market-based reforms. Sen. Paul Coverdell's bill for educational savings accounts has already passed the Senate. Rep. Bill Archer (R., Tex.) is considering similar tax breaks for health care, and Sen. Phil Gramm (R., Tex.) and Rep. John Porter (R., Ill.) have proposed private investment options for Social Security. Republicans should do as much along these lines as possible as early as possible, to get the ball rolling.

But before they get to the details, they must resolve to cut taxes in the first place. It's why they were put on this earth. If President Clinton wants to veto tax cuts, let him do so—and hand the GOP a neatly gift-wrapped campaign issue for the fall.

Getting Microsoft

Gates built a better mousetrap.
(In Sweden, that's not nice.)
At Justice, they've been jumping
As if they harbored lice.
Competitors are livid—
Nobody wants their mouse.
Miss Reno huffs like Wolfman
Outside Bill Gates's house.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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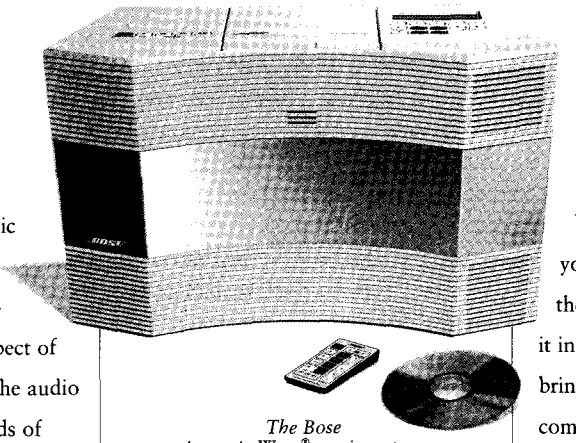
LESS THAN A FOOT TALL, YET LOOKED UP TO BY SO MANY.



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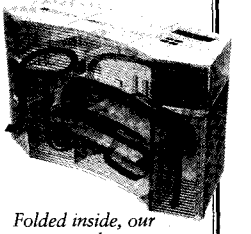

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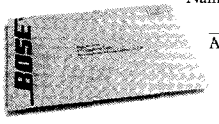

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Israel at Fifty

GOLDA Meir used to observe that the world was sympathetic to Israelis when they were the victims of atrocities, but reviled them when they defended themselves. Mrs. Meir would rather, she said, be alive and disliked than an object of posthumous sympathy. Fifty years after its birth, Israel still finds itself disliked—but alive.

Many of its neighbors have still not come to terms with its existence. It is besieged like no other nation. It has survived by dint of its own considerable courage and strength, and some help from the United States. It has demonstrated its desire to make peace—returning the Sinai to Egypt, signing a treaty with Jordan, returning some territory even to Syria in 1974, negotiating with the PLO today.

Its conservative government, headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was elected two years ago in part because the Israeli public—beleaguered by terrorist attacks—wanted both halves of the slogan "Peace with security." Netanyahu is much abused in the international media for not letting himself be intimidated by the fashionable contempt for Israel that passes for sophistication in Europe, let alone the vitriol that still seems to be the mother's milk of the Middle East.

The American partnership with Israel is held together by many bonds, strategic and moral. One of the most important is that we seem to have the same enemies. The radicals in the Middle East who hate Israel also despise us. This is not simply because we back Israel (as is conventionally said), but also because Israel is an outpost of freedom and Western civilization—which, of course, radicals in that part of the world have long despised as "imperialism," "neocolonialism," "fascism," etc.

For many decades, this radicalism came from a Nasserite "Arab socialism" and nationalism armed by the Soviet Union. Now, with the collapse of this brand of extremist ideology (except for anachronisms like Iraq and Syria), the vacuum has been filled by militant Islamism. For its adherents we are the "Great Satan," and Israel is our little brother. As indeed it is.

Right Flanked

FRENCH conservatives used to say gloatingly of their left-wing opponents, "They can't win with the Communists and they can't win without them." And for many years it was true. But François Mitterrand disproved the first half of this statement in 1981 when he formed a government with Communist ministers. Lionel Jospin's present Socialist government also accepts Communist participation. Having supported the annihilation of social classes and small nations, it seems, is no longer a taint—at least for the Left. Across the European continent, however, a similar dilemma now confronts the moderate Right.

Recent elections in both France and Germany have confirmed an ominous political trend: conservative voters have abandoned moderate parties that spoke only the language of economic conservatism—of markets and prosperity—and ignored the voters' social, moral, and patriotic concerns on such questions as European monetary union, immigration, crime, illegitimacy, etc. The election in Saxony–Anhalt showed a catastrophic fall in support for Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats; but the votes went not to the opposition Social Democrats but to a new extreme right-wing party which came from nowhere to take 13 per cent of the total. Kohl's CDU now looks likely to lose the general election in September.

In France, the candidate of the moderate Right was eliminated in the first round of a special election in Toulon, setting up a race between the Socialists and the National Front which the NF won. French conservatives are accordingly split between those who want to deal with the NF—on the grounds that it has never been explicitly Vichyite as the Communists were explicitly Stalinist, and that it is anyway cleaning up its act—and those who want to quarantine and crush it. Either path repels some mainstream conservatives, and in the meantime the Left wins elections with modest pluralities.

Italy was for decades the real conservative nightmare: 6 to 10 per cent of right-wing votes were regularly wasted on the neo-fascist MSI from 1945 until a few years ago, when Gianfranco Fini finally made it part of the respectable nationalist Right, such that conservative politicians could form coalitions with it. But retrieving lost electoral ground is difficult and uncertain. The sensible course is not to lose it in the first place. Yet here in America, Republicans ignore their strongest supporters' concerns about multiculturalism, bilingualism, uncontrolled immigration (legal and illegal), racial preferences, and everything else summed up in the phrase "the balkanization of America." It is a quick way to return to minority-party status. The trail is already being blazed in France and Germany.

Kill Kyoto

THE United Nations Global Warming treaty agreed to last December in Kyoto appears to be dead in the water. The U.S. Senate is heavily against it, as illustrated by last summer's 95 to 0 approval of the Byrd–Hagel resolution opposing any climate agreement that does not include developing nations like China, India, and Brazil. Because the current treaty applies only to developed nations, opponents think they have won the day. They are wrong.

True, President Clinton has no plans to submit the treaty to the Senate for ratification this year. But treaties have a nasty habit of refusing to die; the Chemical Weap-

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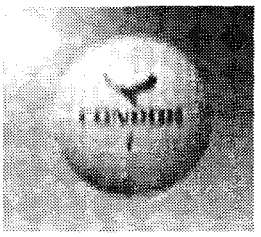

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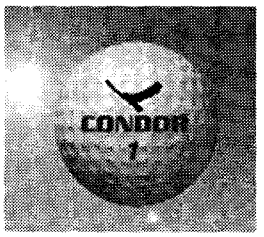

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- They are rimless across the bottom of the lenses so they won't interfere with your line of sight when you look down at the ball.
- They enhance your depth perception by giving you sharper contrast. You can track your shots and judge distances better.
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ons Convention had sat around for years before President Clinton cajoled the Senate into approving it.

The danger is not that Mr. Clinton will push for ratification this year; it's that the Administration will skillfully co-opt opponents. The Clinton budget is riddled with greenhouse pork—federal subsidies for "alternative" energy sources—designed to bribe energy firms into supporting the treaty. The Environmental Protection Agency is exploring its regulatory options—including the possibility of declaring carbon dioxide a "toxic release" that must be reported by all emitting companies—while funding local and regional conferences to generate support for action. The EPA has even co-sponsored a conference with state-level environmental officials about how states can get into the act.

The next round of climate negotiations is slated for November in Buenos Aires. At that time the Clinton Administration hopes to enlist a few more countries so that it can claim "significant" developing-country participation and so disarm treaty critics. The Senate should preempt the Clinton–Gore strategy by debating the Kyoto protocol now, and passing a resolution rejecting the current treaty well before Buenos Aires—and not because other countries refuse to inflict massive harm on their economies to suit left-wing whims, but because no one should. This will put Mr. Clinton on the defensive and, more importantly, signal to the rest of the world that the sole superpower opposes the treaty. Doing nothing only makes eventual ratification more likely.

Let's Go Again to Viagra

THE Age of Viagra is now upon us, or so we are told: Pfizer's new wonder drug will be to the turn of the millennium what "the Pill" was to the Sixties. Male impotence, and all its attendant embarrassment, will be a thing of the past. And science should indeed get two cheers for discovering a treatment that could help millions of marriages. Why withhold the third cheer? For several reasons:

—Any drug that forces us to read an endless series of articles about "prolonged and firmer erections" with our 7 A.M. coffee is perverse. Even more alarming is the prospect that men will now be "more open" about their sexual dysfunctions, at any time of day.

—The sexual revolution, despite the promises of its Robespierres, has already tipped the balance in the war between the sexes in favor of men. Viagra might make that imbalance worse. Are American women really clamoring for more carnal attention from the unfairer sex? Picture our President on Viagra. We would wager that more women would rather men took a pill to increase their commitment. (Or one that induced prolonged apologies: "Oh, darling, really, I'm so, so sorry! Let's go buy some Donna Karan hosiery!")

—The latest twist is that women might respond to Viagra, too. They also suffer from "flagging libido," say the experts. But if both men and women do not want to have sex with each other, why don't they save their money and tell each other jokes, or get dressed, step out, and contribute to the Gross National Product?

—Emotions are inescapable whenever human beings have sexual relations. Impotence can be a reminder of that, and of our mortality as well. If our physical responses are no longer at the mercy of our emotions, and no longer subject to exigencies like age either, we may succeed only in expunging the erotic.

Viagra might make for more sex, but not necessarily for more fun.

Ernst Jünger, R I P

THE German-speaking world has lost its most outstanding writer, thinker, and political personality. Born on March 29, 1895, in romantic Heidelberg, Ernst Jünger interrupted his classical studies at age 17 and joined the Foreign Legion. His pharmacist father succeeded in getting him back home, but just two years later the young man joined the Prussian Army (there was no German Army at that time) at the start of World War I.

Jünger loved the army life because he loved battle. He was wounded 12 times, and he received the order *Pour le mérite*. (With Jünger's death the military branch of that order is extinct.) He remained in the Reichswehr until 1923.

During this period he wrote essays extolling the war, and also a lengthy one praising the worker as the ideal of the century. His views attracted the National Socialists and also their competitor, the "national Bolsheviks." Hitler especially was fascinated by Jünger and, early in the Nazis' rule, offered him a seat in the Reichstag, but Jünger declined, saying that he had not the slightest desire to represent 60,000 idiots. Then or later, he never gave the Nazis his help, never uttered an anti-Semitic phrase.

At the outbreak of World War II, he spurned them openly; he joined the Wehrmacht (the shortest way into emigration) and was sent to France. Then came the publication of two of his books, in which intelligent Nazis discovered the convictions of a true enemy. One of these, *On the Marble Cliffs*, recounts the mythical tale of two brothers who live on a mountaintop in the center of an island from which they watch the destructive, indeed diabolical, activities of the island's shepherds. The other, *Gardens and Roads*, refers explicitly to the war and was soon confiscated. In this book, Jünger confessed that a few perfect lines in a poem might have greater value than a battle won. In 1944 the infamous Judge Freisler wanted to indict him, but Hitler prevented it—the scandal would have been too great. Luckily, Jünger had not yet been unmasked as the author of an underground pamphlet called *About the Peace: An Address to the Younger Generation*.

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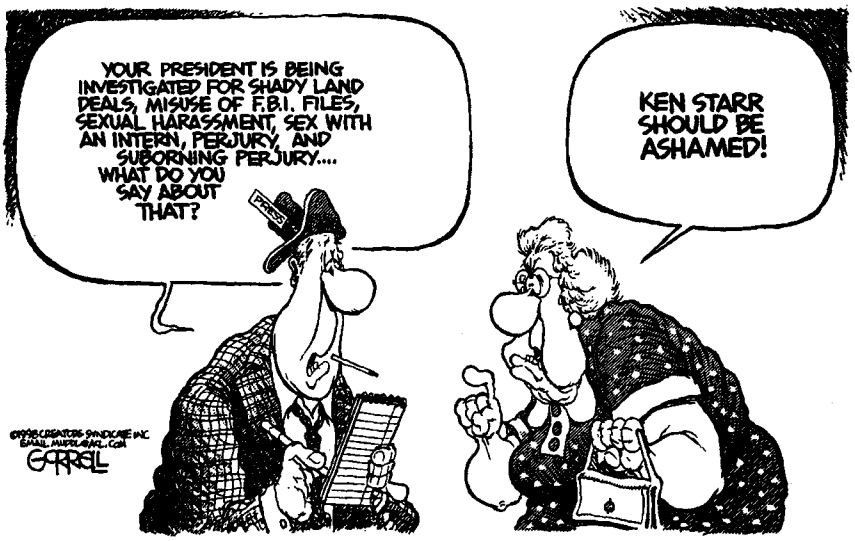
There are 18 volumes of his works—essays, novels, accounts of his travels, and, above all, his diaries. During World War II he was stationed in his beloved Paris (where he twice read the whole Bible). Perhaps more famous in France than in Germany, hated intensely by the extreme Left, he was one of the speakers at the commemoration ceremonies in Verdun in 1984, together with Kohl and Mitterrand.

Jünger believed strongly in the life eternal, as he confessed to the author of these lines, who visited him several times at his home in a wing of a Stauffenberg Castle (it was Count Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg who tried to assassinate Hitler). In Heaven he might encounter his son Ernst, who had been jailed briefly by the Gestapo and who died as a soldier near Carrara, on marble cliffs.

—ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN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KEN STARR SHOULD BE ASHAMED!
GARREL

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Mr. Buckley,

It was Samuel Goldwyn, not Yogi Berra, who said, "Only in America," on hearing of the election of Robert Briscoe as Lord Mayor of Dublin.

It might be an idea to start a corrections section in NATIONAL REVIEW. You could start with this one and follow on with the fact that it was not Goering who reached for his revolver, nor Burke who remarked on the price of freedom, but Hanns Johst and John Philpot Curran respectively.

Cordially,
Joseph McEvoy
San Clemente, Calif.

Dear Mr. McEvoy: Many thanks. If you will edit the Corrections Column, we'll publish it! Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

What's happening to me?

As a hip college student, I used to make nasty comments when you, Reagan, and Selleck would come on TV pitching NATIONAL REVIEW. Now, I've canceled my subscription to *Rolling Stone* and have become a NATIONAL REVIEW subscriber.

Am I no longer hip?

Sincerely,
Stephen Catanzarite
Beaver, Pa.

Dear Mr. Catanzarite: You are the hippest guy in town. Welcome. Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley,

Although I am unfamiliar with the Hindi verb, which Jonathan R. Regec is seeking, for "to contemplate one's navel" ("Notes & Asides," Feb. 23), the Greek *omphaloskopein* would serve in a pinch. The term *omphaloskopoi* (nominative plural) was deprecatingly applied by Barlaam the Calabrian to the monks under the supervision of St. Gregory Palamas (+ Nov. 14, 1359) because in their prayers they lowered their eyes to the center of their bodies, focusing their attention on the heart (not, as Barlaam imagined, on the navel). St. Gregory won the day, and this tradition of prayer has been preserved in Eastern Orthodox monasticism to the present.

A sus órdenes,
Rev. Paul Lehninger
Wisconsin Lutheran College
Milwaukee, Wisc.

Dear *NR*,

"I do believe that the Republicans have fallen into the habit of too much navel contemplation," Tom Swift observed omphaloskeptically.

Cheers,
Lars Wiberg
bjara@shore. net

Bill,

It's not in my dictionary, either, and I don't know what the Hindus use, but the Greek word Jonathan Regec is looking for is "omphaloskepsis."

I take no credit for this erudition. There was an outstanding engineering manager named Milt Radant at Hughes Aircraft who wrote approximately the following in a Weekly Activity Report, "A great deal of time was spent in omphaloskepsis." Management loved it, and it caught on. Give Milt the credit.

Cheers,
Bill Miller
Corpus Christi, Tex.

Hail Milt! Cordially, **—WFB**

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BREAD & CIRCUSES

Paper Tiger

THE charge that Republicans are presiding over a "do-nothing Congress" is wrong. The GOP is doing something very real: effectively blocking the entire second-term agenda of the say-nothing President. In recent days, the GOP has won legislative battles on education, funding for the International Monetary Fund, and human rights—and it may just be getting started.

The strong economy bolsters President Clinton's job-approval numbers, but he lacks the credibility and authority to win policy battles on Capitol Hill. In fact, when he endorses measures these days it only seems to make them less likely to pass. Bill Clinton has acquired a reverse Midas touch.

Within days of the world's learning of Monica Lewinsky, the President outlined an ambitious agenda in his State of the Union address. Halfway through its session, Congress appears unlikely to enact *any* of his priorities. Clinton's political weakness may go unremarked by the media, but it is unmistakable.

His inability to prevail on education, an issue that generally favors Democrats, is the most striking recent example of his scandal-induced feebleness. The Senate's approval of the bill introduced by Sen. Paul Coverdell (R., Ga.) to provide for tax-free education savings accounts represented a thorough rout of the Democrats. The President's entire education agenda was defeated, as the Senate blocked Administration-backed amendments to fund school construction, 100,000 new teachers, and after-school programs. On the other hand, GOP amendments to ban national testing and permit federal support for single-sex schools passed.

In addition to blocking liberal initiatives on education, there are promising signs that Republicans are about to take charge on another Democratic issue. Initially intimidated by the President's demand that "every penny of any surplus" be saved until he had proposed unspecified measures to strengthen Social Security, Republicans are now advancing their own privatization proposals. A recent NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll showed the public preferring that congressional Republicans rather than Bill Clinton take the lead in reforming Social Security. The President is skeptical about permitting workers to dedicate a portion of their payroll taxes to private retirement accounts, but Sen. Phil Gramm (R., Tex.) has a plan to do just that which is attracting Democratic support.

When the Administration's $22-billion child-care plan was unveiled earlier this year, only a handful of Republicans dared to criticize the scheme. But now Congress is likely to approve little more than modest tax breaks available both to families that pay for day care and to families with stay-at-home moms. The President's plan to permit younger retirees to buy into Medicare, meanwhile, met with immediate GOP resistance and has been ignored by Congress.

The State of the Union address included a strong pitch for IMF funding. But, as the *New York Times* put it, GOP leaders dealt "a potentially fatal blow to one of President Clinton's top foreign-policy goals" when they delayed approval of the Administration's request for $18 billion for the fund. On another foreign-policy front, the Administration strongly opposes a bill sponsored by Rep. Frank Wolf (R., Va.) and Sen. Arlen Specter (R., Pa.) to deny non-humanitarian aid and loans to countries engaging in religious persecution. The bill recently won committee approval in the House by a vote of 31 to 5.

Many lawmakers haven't connected the dots between these policy losses, and so they fail to realize that they are looking at the portrait of a badly weakened President. At least Clinton has gotten the picture. Take his recent action on an initiative that didn't even require congressional approval.

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala was within hours of announcing that federal funds would be available for needle-exchange programs when the President withdrew his earlier support. White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles informed Secretary Shalala that the decision was just "too politically risky." There had been an internal dispute between HHS staff and the Office of National Drug Control Policy about the efficacy of clean-needle programs. When the President flipped his position on funding, it was clear that he would rather enrage both the AIDS lobby and the Congressional Black Caucus than take on congressional Republicans and his own drug czar.

EVEN the tobacco legislation that once was considered a slam dunk may be in trouble. The anti-tobacco legislation introduced by Sen. John McCain (R., Ariz.) is backed by the President and, unfortunately, enjoys the support of Majority Leader Trent Lott. But Speaker Newt Gingrich opposes the bill, declaring that the Democrats "want a tax increase and they want to hide it as a tobacco bill."

The public seems to agree. In an NBC/*Wall Street Journal* survey, 70 per cent said they believe the supporters of the McCain bill are more interested in "getting additional tax revenue for the Federal Government" than "cutting teen smoking by raising cigarette prices." The President insists that he's only interested in protecting children—but who believes him?

A large majority of the public thinks Bill Clinton is untrustworthy and lacks character. In the midst of the Lewinsky scandal, when the President engaged in a showdown with Saddam Hussein, questions were raised about whether he had the requisite moral authority to commit American troops to battle. It is now clear that Bill Clinton lacks the moral authority even to reduce class sizes.

It is by no means a self-confident congressional majority that has been rebuffing the President on issue after issue. Republicans have been tentative about confronting Clinton ever since the budget showdown in 1995. Now they should look at what they have accomplished and realize that the President who looks so strong on paper is weak everywhere else. —KATE O'BEIRNE

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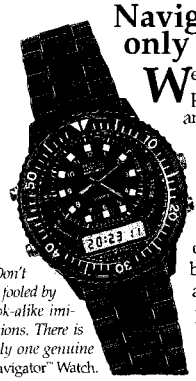

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THE NEXT FRONT

Closed Books

Conservatism benefited over the last decade from the inroads it made in the world of publishing. No more.

DAVID S. BERNSTEIN

BETWEEN the end of World War II and the beginning of the Reagan Presidency, liberals had a virtual lock on America's cultural and intellectual outlets. It was only during the post-1980 conservative renaissance that the Right came to dominate some media (talk radio, direct mail) and make impressive inroads in others. In particular, book publishing went from a sleepy industry dominated by the academic Left to a dynamic, big-money business that was suddenly willing to give conservative books a chance, as long as they contributed to the bottom line. But recent, radical changes in the book business have altered the conditions that allowed these conservative gains. In the future, we can expect to see far fewer books by conservative academics, intellectuals, and journalists on the market—and probably a corresponding reduction in conservative firepower.

American publishers are divided into two categories. The New York corporate publishing world consists of Bantam, Doubleday, Dell (which recently announced that it is buying Random House to create the largest publishing house in the U.S.), Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, Warner Books, Penguin–Putnam, Norton, and a few others. This cohort publishes half the titles available at the typical Barnes & Noble or Borders superstore; their wares might make up 75 per cent of the stock at a smaller chain store like WaldenBooks or B. Dalton, and an even higher percentage at warehouse stores (like Price Club), which are capturing a rapidly growing share of the book market.

The second category is more diffuse. Under the catch-all title of "independent publishers" is included everything from academic and university presses to niche and specialty publishers concentrating on one or two topics (like science or sports) or genres (like romance novels). While some of their books may appear on the shelves of the large chain stores, these small players seldom reach a mass audience. They are content publishing what the industry refers to as "mid-list" books.

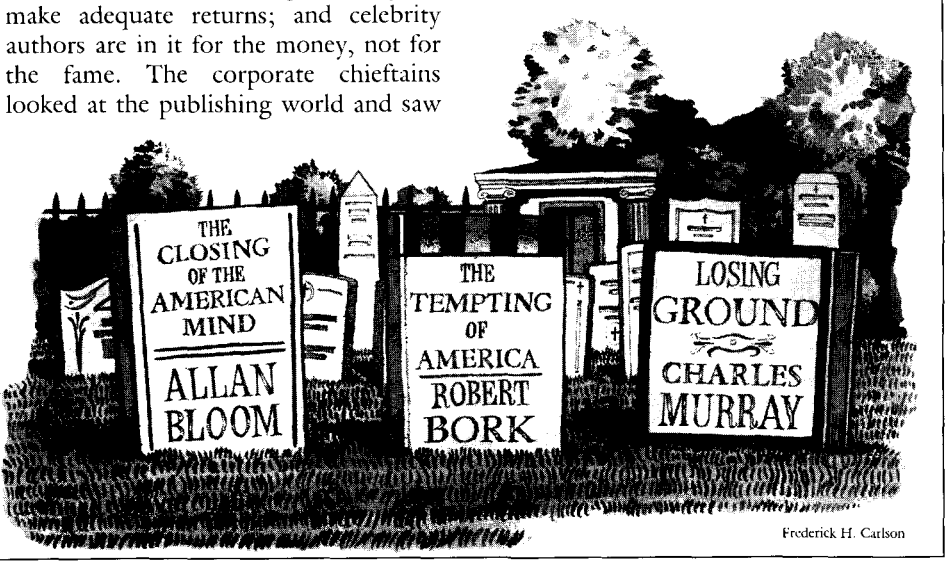
The trait that mid-list books, whether scholarly or popular, have in common is that they tend not to make a lot of money for either the publisher or the author. Traditionally, the publishing industry didn't care. Authors wrote books to make a meaningful contribution to public knowledge, or for ego gratification, or to get tenure. Publishers paid authors very little up front, and while the publishers made only a few dollars on each title, in the aggregate they realized adequate—if not spectacular—profits.

But large companies like Viacom (the current owners of Simon & Schuster), News Corp. (HarperCollins), and Time-Warner (Warner Books and Little, Brown) did not enter publishing to make adequate returns; and celebrity authors are in it for the money, not for the fame. The corporate chieftains looked at the publishing world and saw only the best-sellers. What would happen, they asked, if a company solely published books that had a chance to be best-sellers? With visions of publishing two hundred Stephen King novels each year, the media and entertainment companies set about to remake book publishing in the image of Hollywood: the only books that matter are those that become hits; all the rest are dogs.

Of course, no one wants to be known as the guy who publishes dogs. So the directive came down in publishing houses all over New York: Fewer mid-list books, more best-sellers. Stop wasting the company's money on all those treatises by unknown academics (like, say, Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*), think-tank geeks, journalists at small-circulation magazines, and other assorted oddballs. Publish only books with obvious wide commercial appeal. Leave the niche titles for the independent publishers.

This process began just in the last five years, and not without resistance from the editors at these houses, most of whom still hold to the quaint notion that books are, or should be, of lasting quality. Most editors are happy to publish Lite books, which are presumed to have wide audiences, as long as their bosses let them publish real books as well. So a precarious bargain has been struck, and editors may still acquire and develop a few mid-list books. However, with fewer opportunities they will usually choose ones that jibe with their personal aesthetic or political agenda.

The 1980s and early '90s could be called the heyday of conservatives in publishing. Supported by a handful of exceptional New York editors, most notably the late Erwin Glikes at The Free Press and his counterpart at Basic



Frederick H. Carlson

Mr. Bernstein is an editor with a major New York publisher.

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Books, the late Martin Kessler (who, despite his liberal politics, was first and foremost committed to open debate of serious ideas), conservative intellectuals published a number of books that were both commercially successful and ideologically important. *Losing Ground* by Charles Murray; *The Tempting of America* by Robert Bork; *The End of History* and *The Last Man* by Francis Fukuyama; numerous books by Thomas Sowell; *The Moral Sense* by James Q. Wilson; *Out of the Barrio* by Linda Chavez; *Illiberal Education* by Dinesh D'Souza—all these did more than surprise their publishers by selling well. They also provided crucial ideological ammunition for the conservative movement, and helped persuade countless Americans that conservatism was a legitimate alternative to the postwar liberal consensus. It is fair to argue that the groundwork for the Republican takeover of Congress was laid by these publishing successes. They certainly shook up the liberal media and academia.

Books were the one way most conservatives had of reaching the public mind directly, without the censorship of liberal journalists.

But with the changes in the publishing business, works like these will become exceedingly rare. Among other reasons, there are not all that many editors at the big New York publishers, and there is even less diversity among them. Virtually all of them are white; most of them are women; and practically every last one of them is a liberal (the few conservatives and principled liberals have either died or been purged). These are not people who are going to squander what little editorial freedom they have left on publishing unknown conservative writers; instead, they will seek out the familiar cast of academic feminists, left-wing cranks, and former government bureaucrats.

Not all conservative authors will find themselves out in the cold. Celebrities like Rush Limbaugh, William Bennett, George Will, and Newt Gingrich will find willing publishers as long as they remain celebrities. And several bright stars already under contract will see their books out soon, including *Reason* editor Virginia Postrel, the Manhattan Institute's Wendy Shalit, and *NR*'s John Miller. But from here on out, most less-well-known conservatives can give up on having their books published in New York.

The Free Press—a stalwart for conservative and contrarian liberal ideas for a decade, first under Erwin Glikes, then under Adam Bellow—is being reinvented as a more conventional publisher, losing its edge and its instinct for big, controversial issues. Basic Books, which published so many influential works by conservatives, has been purchased by an independent outfit called The Perseus Group. Perseus, based in Washington, D.C., has attempted to corner the market on mid-list books on intellectual topics by buying or establishing several imprints, including Civitas (headed by Harvard celebrity prof Henry Louis Gates), New Republic Books, and Public Affairs. Under this corporate umbrella, Basic will concentrate on history, science, and the humanities; politics and related subjects will be the province of Public Affairs, whose publisher, Peter Osnos, was formerly head of Times Books. There he published classics like Bill Clinton's *Putting People First*; the book version of the ClintonCare plan; and Sen. Bob Packwood's *Secret Diary* (which was a commercial flop). It isn't hard to guess where that leaves conservative authors.

Some university presses are willing to take on conservative projects, but for the most part their distribution and marketing pale beside the resources available to commercial publishers. Not much good in publishing a book if no one knows about it.

Regnery Publishing has had dramatic success with conservative books over the years, and will probably continue to do so. But Regnery is an explicitly conservative house—its books are for the most part intended not to persuade non-believers, but rather to sell in large quantities to the converted. Regnery's most recent best-sellers were FBI agent Gary Aldrich's problematic White House memoir, *Unlimited Access*, and an attack on O. J. Simpson, *Murder in Brentwood*, by the even more problematic Mark Fuhrman. Aldrich didn't convince a single American not to vote for Bill Clinton, and Fuhrman was more interested in self-vindication than in advancing the public good.

The special importance of the conservative books put out by houses like The Free Press and Basic Books is that they spoke to people across the political spectrum. Conservatives cheered D'Souza's *Illiberal Education*. Moderates respected it, and many found themselves in general agreement. Liberals hated the book, but were compelled to argue with its premises and conclusions, rather than ignoring them. D'Souza succeeded in reorienting the whole debate about multiculturalism on campus and in society generally.

Other conservative books were also simultaneously controversial and successful because they broke new ground. In *The Real Anita Hill*, David Brock was one of the first conservatives to use the favorite weapon of progressive muckrakers, investigative journalism, in this case against a left-wing icon. And Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve* tackled a big question—what role heredity might play in class differences—which denizens of the Ivory Tower had failed to ask, largely because from their academic viewpoint it didn't even look like a question. The strength of conservative intellectuals has been their willingness to take up the hard issues that the establishment was—and is—afraid to touch.

And it is this that the conservative movement stands to lose if it is successfully frozen out of mainstream publishing. Books were the one way most conservatives had of reaching the public mind directly, without the censorship of liberal journalists. People could read Murray's *Losing Ground* and make up their own minds about the effect of Great Society programs on the urban poor, or Brock's book and make their own judgment about Anita Hill.

WITH the loss of access to mainstream trade publishing channels, what can conservatives do? A conservative takeover of the New York publishing establishment is fun to contemplate (Why *doesn't* Richard Scaife buy *The New Yorker*?) but not very practical. Besides, books and magazines are becoming old media. The rapid growth of the Internet, and the democratization made possible by the invention of desktop publishing, give conservatives the opportunity to get ahead of the curve for once. Let the

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liberals have Barnes & Noble. Just as conservatives took over and revitalized talk radio (both intellectually and commercially) after liberals established a monopoly on television news, it's time to look for fresh alternatives in both new technology and old. Conservatives should adopt the World Wide Web as the next intellectual battleground, taking on digital magazines like *Slate* and *Salon* with competing sites that offer more substance and intellectual excitement.

To be sure, conservatives can make their own forays into hardcover books (author Peter Collier, with some backing from the Bradley Foundation, is in the process of starting up a small intellectual press that will publish interesting books across the political and cultural spectrum), but at the same time they should explore alternatives—for example, short, topical pamphlets. Publishing inexpensive broadsides would mark a return to the roots of intellectual publishing, feeding the perennial American appetite for contact with the great questions about American culture and Western civilization with an affordable, populist product. Collier and his colleague at the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, David Horowitz, have already experimented with a handful of pamphlets, with promising results. All it takes is some energy and imagination, born of the frustration of being locked out of yet one more channel of the mainstream culture. □

Boxer Rebellion

California Republicans can't find a strong candidate, but this time it may not matter.

MATTHEW ROBINSON

LOS ANGELES

EVER since Ronald Reagan's departure from the political scene, California has been short on conservative politicians with national stature. Party infighting and a lackluster back bench have reduced the Golden State's offerings to the current governor, Pete Wilson—who for years has clashed with his state's conservative activists—and the quickly rising attorney general, Dan Lungren.

The lame-duck governor's position as California's leading Republican certainly won't be threatened by the candidates currently vying for the right to challenge Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer. Some see grounds for hope in the fact that both the surviving candidates, State Treasurer Matt Fong and multimillionaire Darrell Issa, plus three-term Congressman Frank Riggs (who has already dropped out), have sought to be known as "the conservative" in the race. "These candidates show how tremendously healthy the Republican Party is," says Shawn Steel, California Republican Party treasurer.

In other quarters, the dearth of rising stars is giving rise to despair. "What this race says is that the conservative movement is not viable in California," says conservative pollster Arnold Steinberg of Steinberg & Associates. "We don't come up with good candidates." Indeed, there may be only one person who can save this year's lackluster GOP field: Barbara Boxer herself.

Sen. Boxer is an arch feminist of the stiletto-heel-to-throat variety. She hasn't caught on with Californians outside her home base of Marin County in 16 years, and she never will. She is likely to prove in November that there still is no cure for Republican disarray quite like an unreconstructed liberal opponent.

When Barbara Boxer won her Senate seat in 1992, the climate was more than favorable—it was the "Year of the Woman," and President Bush had given up on campaigning in the state—and her staff made the most of every opportunity (remember the last-minute smear against her opponent, Bruce Herschensohn?). Now she is trying to sell her feminist liberalism in a midterm election in the Year of the Intern.

Sen. Boxer's number-one campaign issue is "reproductive rights": "For every assault on a woman's right to choose, I fought against those who would force us to return to the days of back-alley abortions." One of her major accomplishments, supporters say, is a domestic-violence hotline. And she is unrelenting in her crusade to ban "junk guns" and require child safety locks for guns.

When she was in the House, where she served for ten years, Mrs. Boxer was the highest-spending member. She was also virulently anti-business. But with the election drawing near, she has been trimming her sails. She now would allow exportation of encryption technology—a critical issue to potential donors in Silicon Valley. (In 1995, she betrayed the high-tech sector by vociferously opposing tort reform.) Sen. Boxer has even come out for targeted tax cuts, proving that the debate over taxes is no longer about economics but is now about freedom versus social engineering.

Barbara Boxer by Roman Genn

But if a conservative philosophical tide has altered even Barbara Boxer's course it has hardly swept in a bumper crop of GOP candidates to oppose her. It says more about her than about them that Sen. Boxer hasn't broken 50 per cent in any matchup the pollsters have tested.

Rep. Frank Riggs—who may actually be the sort of rising star the party needs—entered the race too late and was unable to make headway against the two candidates who were there ahead of him. A March Field Poll showed him the favorite of only 4 per cent of likely primary voters, against 15 per cent for Darrell Issa and 11 per cent for Matt Fong.

Issa, 45 years old, is a wealthy San

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Diegan who earned his estimated $250 million making and selling car alarms. His campaign warns that "he'll spend whatever it takes" to win. He has already spent $4 million in a television and radio ad blitz that is clearly paying off.

How is it a man with no political experience can best a state official and knock a sitting congressman out of the race? Issa is courting conservatives with a barrage of ads urging the elimination of the IRS, supporting a state ballot initiative to stop bilingual education, and zinging Barbara Boxer as a liberal. And when he delivers his message in person, Issa electrifies audiences.

There is still no cure for Republican disarray quite like an unreconstructed liberal.

At a recent convention of the California Republican Assembly, the state's largest grass-roots group, he announced that he had a new speechwriter—Barbara Boxer. He read one of her fund-raising letters which begged for cash to stop the "conservative millionaire": "He opposes abortion on demand; he wants to abolish the National Endowment for the Arts; and he wants to repeal the ban on assault weapons." At the end of each count in this indictment, Issa proudly declared: "Guilty as charged."

So what's not to like? Critics point out that Issa has not always sounded so conservative, and they wonder if his spots will stay changed. Issa explains that he became pro-life in the early Seventies when he discovered that his paternal grandmother died at 24 from an infection following an attempted abortion. But he told the *San Diego Union-Tribune* in February that "Abortion is something that has always been with us . . . it is something you attempt to manage, not to end." In his days as a big GOP donor, Issa often backed pro-choice, liberal Republicans. In San Diego, he funded moderates running against conservative State Assembly candidates Bob Trettin and Howard Kaloogian. (He did later support Trettin and Kaloogian in the general election.)

As recently as 1994, Issa told the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, "I am a proud liberal Republican." Fong supporters use this quote in their faxes to GOP players around the state. "There seems to be a willing suspension of disbelief in the party," says Catherine Rayner, a political consultant and former field director for the hard-right Allied Business PAC. "Issa's operatives and his own deep pockets have reshaped his image in time for the election. But there are some of us who remember who he is."

Issa was able to overtake Fong, the previous favorite, because of the long-time officeholder's one major weakness. An Air Force Academy graduate, the 44-year-old Fong is articulate, precise, and clearly intelligent in one-on-one conversation. But on the podium he turns from cautious into downright timid. Writes one Bay Area columnist, "In a sea of somnolent speeches at the Republican National Convention, the state treasurer's speech stood out for its sheer catatonic wonder."

So far there have been two occasions on which Issa and Fong have squared off: the state Republican convention in Burlingame, in Northern California, and the CRA convention, which took place in Southern California. Both times, Fong failed to engage the audience. At the CRA convention, for example, instead of giving this Reaganite crowd some red meat, Fong droned on about numbers in loan programs and fiscal health. The result? Issa got two-thirds of the vote, and Riggs came in second.

On the abortion question, Fong holds to Steve Forbes's 1996 position: attempting to reduce the number of abortions through measures such as parental-consent laws and partial-birth-abortion bans, but permitting abortion without restriction for the first sixty days of a pregnancy.

In his attempts at self-promotion Fong is eerily reminiscent of the 1996 GOP presidential candidate—"My strong suit is that I'm somebody who has practical experience. I've sat across the table from Democrats and Republicans and I get things done"—and they will probably work as well for him as they did for Bob Dole.

This race is most notable for its no-shows. Gov. Pete Wilson's choice, San Diego mayor Susan Golding, was once the favorite, but she blew all her cash before the race even started.

Meanwhile, the California GOP is in one sense the victim of the national GOP's success. The 1994 Republican takeover of the House of Representatives created a new outlet for Republican ambition. Both Rep. Chris Cox and Gingrich ally Rep. David Dreier chose not to run for the Senate this time. "Everybody wanted Chris Cox to be in this race," says Shawn Steel. "But he thinks he can do more good where he is."

That may be true, but it is of little comfort to a California GOP that has failed to elect a senator since Pete Wilson moved to the governor's mansion. The only hope is that Barbara Boxer will help the state GOP and the conservative movement where they have failed to help themselves. □

Whose Choice?

Abortion is supposed to empower women. Tell that to a girl in trouble.

WENDY SHALIT

"But oh, thrice guilty is he who drove her to the desperation which impelled her to the crime!" —Susan B. Anthony, 1869

MUCH is known about the details of *Roe* v. *Wade* and *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, about which Justices and politicians were in favor and which ones were opposed. Yet the woman who opts for an abortion, the circumstances leading up to her choice, what she is actually feeling at the time—all are murkier.

Miss Shalit is a contributing editor of City Journal.

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Emotions tend to be messy, after all, and do not lend themselves especially well to ideology.

But a recent debate in—of all unlikely places—*Glamour* magazine lets us peer into this very private world. In the March issue, Diane Goldner explains why nonsurgical abortions—using, for example, RU-486—are "more acceptable" to her than surgical abortions. Along the way, however, her essay, entitled "Ending My Pregnancy," tells a startling tale that sheds light on what choice really means for women.

Two years ago, when Miss Goldner discovered she was pregnant, she was happy: "I felt ready. I was 34, and although I might not have chosen to have a child right then, I wanted the baby. I also thought my boyfriend and I were in a solid relationship, though we were going through a tense period." Unfortunately, her boyfriend had different ideas. "I hoped he would embrace me and our child. But he couldn't. All he said when I told him the news was, 'You poor thing.'" Miss Goldner still did not give up, reminding him shyly, "We could get married." Her boyfriend, as it happens, couldn't have disagreed more.

"I am pro-choice," Miss Goldner continues, "but the decision to end a pregnancy was not a choice I ever wanted to make." She alludes to some nerve condition her then-boyfriend was suffering from, which he was vaguely concerned might be passed on to their child. In any case, it soon emerges that this was not the real point of contention between them. Miss Goldner explains: "I considered having the baby on my own; my boyfriend pleaded with me not to. In the end, I agreed with his viewpoint: My child should have a father. A good and loving father."

This once was an argument for a shotgun wedding. Today it has become a curious argument for abortion. Since our child should have a loving father, kill the child, please, since I don't love you or our child enough.

Not surprisingly, the financial impossibility of being a single mother "overwhelms" Miss Goldner: "I couldn't do it." So she decides to have an abortion. But when she visits her gynecologist, she is horrified to learn that she will have to wait six weeks (an embryo typically has to be seven or eight weeks old before it is large enough for a surgical abortion to be performed). "I pleaded with her. How could I continue for

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"Sacrifices for Peace"

What else does the world expect Israel to do?

There is persistent pressure on Israel to bring "sacrifices for peace." It is understood that these "sacrifices" refer to greater "flexibility" in dealing with the Arabs, but mean primarily that Israel should allow its dismemberment, in order to bring peace to the region.

What are the facts?

A Bizarre Concept. The concept to bring "sacrifices for peace" is a new one that has never before found application in world history. It was created by Arab propaganda to induce Israel to agree to its dismemberment, to give strategic assets to those who are determined to destroy it.

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has been subjected to almost constant Arab terror, to unceasing Arab aggression, and to three major wars. In the Six-Day War, it recovered its heartland of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; it captured the Golan Heights from Syria, which had been used for decades to shell and spread terror over much of northern Israel; and it conquered Gaza and the Sinai Desert that had been used by Egypt as staging ground and invasion route to Israel.

Here are three good sacrifices that the Arabs could bring for peace: (1) Abandon the insistence on recovering the Golan; (2) Stop the clamor about the division of Jerusalem; (3) Disarm the Palestinian "police."

Many Sacrifices for Peace. In order to achieve peace with its neighbors, Israel brought sacrifices for peace that have no precedent in the history of the world. For peace with Egypt, Israel returned the entire Sinai. There is little thanks on the part of Egypt for this generosity and this sacrifice for peace. The controlled Egyptian press spews daily anti-Israel venom. President Mubarak has never visited Jerusalem. It is the coolest possible peace. A sacrifice for peace brought in vain—probably a major act of folly on the part of Israel.

Israel made sacrifices for peace by signing a peace treaty with Jordan. In that peace, Israel granted Jordan a large yearly allowance of fresh water from its own dwindling and meager resources and accepted a petty demand for "border rectification"—yielding of land. As for Syria, no offered sacrifice for peace seems to be sufficient to satisfy its dictator, President Hafez Assad. He is unwilling to consider even an ice-cold peace, except for Israel's total surrender of the Golan Heights. Fortunately, under the current Israeli government such a surrender is not in the cards.

The greatest sacrifice for peace that Israel has brought was the resuscitation of the bankrupt and moribund PLO terror organization and the acceptance of it "chairman" Yasser Arafat as a negotiating partner. In this ill-advised process, foisted on Israel by world pressure and by its previous government, Israel has made far-reaching and existential sacrifices and concessions. It has yielded control of the Gaza Strip and of all major "West Bank" cities to the Palestinian Authority and has agreed to detailed plans to grant further autonomy to the Palestinians. In what is probably the ultimate folly in this process, Israel has tolerated the formation of a Palestinian "police force" (actually an army) of 40,000 men—the largest police-to-population ratio in the world (!)—and has equipped this "police force' with a complete arsenal of automatic weapons. As the world now knows, these weapons were turned on Israeli soldiers and civilians at the very first opportunity that the Palestinian leaders provoked.

The Arab countries, not Israel, are killing peace in the Middle East. The PLO, apart from the bloody crimes that it has committed against Israel, has now established a virtual dictatorship in the territory allotted to it. In Egypt, thousands of Copts have been killed and their churches burned. President Assad of Syria has occupied Lebanon and has killed and tortured thousands. Iraq, under its dictator Saddam Hussein, is a rogue state attacking its neighbors and killing its own citizens. Saudi Arabia is a monarchical tyranny. Sudan is engaged in the systematic slaughter and enslavement of its black African people. How strange that nobody asks the Palestinians or any of the Arab states to bring any sacrifices for peace. Here are three good sacrifices that the Arabs could bring for peace: (1) Abandon the insistence on recovering the Golan; (2) Stop the clamor about the division of Jerusalem; (3) Disarm the Palestinian "police." Billy clubs are good enough for London Bobbies. Why should any more be needed to patrol Nablus, Hebron and Bethlehem?

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more than a month into a pregnancy I knew I would terminate? The prospect was nightmarish. With each passing minute, I felt more connected to the life growing in me. In another six weeks . . . I felt my heart might really break by then."

Worse still, "To my own surprise, I had already found myself abstaining from medicine and alcohol—the things I would do if I were planning to continue the pregnancy. In the same way, I felt very loving toward my boyfriend, as if the baby were binding us together in some primal way—an unnerving feeling, since he and I had, by then, decided to cut our ties."

Everyone may be targeting the wrong sex. We should start asking about the dishonorable boyfriends behind these women's choices.

She feels "panic rising" in her. "I can't wait six weeks," she insists to her gynecologist. Richard Hausknecht, MD, then enters the picture. At the time, he happened to be testing a nonsurgical abortion drug, methotrexate, which is similar to mifepristone (commonly known as RU-486). So Dr. Hausknecht injected a series of drugs into Miss Goldner over several weeks. She experienced some contractions, and since she was only nine or ten days pregnant, she bled "what seemed like my period."

Events march, and in retrospect she is "grateful for the speed with which I was able to terminate my pregnancy." For "if I had had to wait weeks for an abortion, each moment would have been torture."

Stories like Diane Goldner's bolster the thesis of those, like Serrin Foster, executive director of Feminists for Life, who insist that women have abortions out of a lack of financial and emotional support. Any woman who had a meaningful choice, Miss Foster contends, would reject abortion. Even the famously pro-choice bible, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, first issued in 1973 by the Boston Women's Health Collective, acknowledges that experiences like Miss Goldner's are quite common. On page 346, one woman laments, "My lover was opposed to having the child (as a team) and I didn't want another child without his help, so I decided on abortion. I was not happy with this because I wanted the child and was in love with the father."

In the end, the editors of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* dismiss such women, explaining that "Increasingly, younger women are vulnerable to right-wing or fundamentalist religious values and propaganda being disseminated in the wider society . . . From this pressure to carry a pregnancy to term you may become vulnerable to other pressures—to keep your baby or give it away." But it is painfully clear that the pressure to keep our babies is not coming from right-wing propaganda, but a little closer to home.

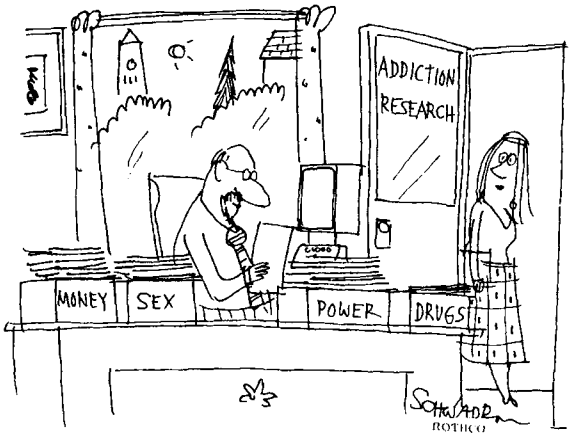
Take 27-year-old Carolyn C. Gargaro, for example, who calls herself "pro-woman and pro-life" and runs a whimsical website expressing her views on the issues of the day (http://www.gargaro.com/political.html). Her abortion page is somber in tone, lamenting how abortion has promoted the "loving and leaving" philosophy among men of her generation.

And in the current (May) issue of *Glamour*, all but one of the letters to the editor express support for Miss Goldner, and share her ambivalence about abortion. One woman from Tucson writes: "I was very moved by Diane Goldner's 'Ending My Pregnancy.' At 21, I also decided to end my pregnancy early . . . Words can't describe the emotional trauma of knowing that a life was slowly forming inside me only to be eventually taken away. I understand Goldner's fear that her heart might break if she had to wait. Because in the end, mine did." Then a woman from Chicago notes that "when I got pregnant, my boyfriend and I decided the nonsurgical method was best because I could end my pregnancy at home." Nonetheless, "my nonsurgical procedure was not the quick fix I wanted—for my body or my heart."

The only unsympathetic letter is from a pro-lifer, a registered nurse who points out that "every year I see younger premature babies surviving." She scolds Miss Goldner: "Goldner writes that she felt she had to have the nonsurgical procedure, rather than waiting for a surgical abortion, because her growing connection to the life within her made her 'panic.' But early-term abortions are no more moral than later ones. . . . At what exact moment does the author consider unborn children to be more than just cells?"

This pro-lifer is right, and yet she misses the point. In this she displays what is wrong with the pro-life movement today, always winning the intellectual battle, but always losing the war. The central drama in Diane Goldner's article was not "When does life begin?" but rather, "You poor thing"—as Goldner's boyfriend put it when she told him what she thought was good news. Too many men now find it utterly inconceivable that their girlfriends' pregnancies could have the slightest thing to do with them.

For too long, the abortion debate has almost exclusively focused on women; the movie *Citizen Ruth*, for instance, was all about the battle between pro-choicers and pro-lifers for the mind of the pregnant Ruth—her baby's father was somewhere far off-stage. Pro-choicers make the issue a matter of the "woman's body," and too often all we see of pro-lifers is when they attempt to convert women at the clinic door.



But everyone may be targeting the wrong sex. We should start asking about all the dishonorable boyfriends behind these women's "choices." For the woman who seeks an abortion is not a woman lusting for baby-killing, nor is she typically a woman who delights in her opportunity to exercise this particular freedom. Instead, women like Diane Goldner have more often than not once said hopefully to their boyfriend, "We could get married . . . ?" and have been told: not in a million years. "You poor thing" indeed. □

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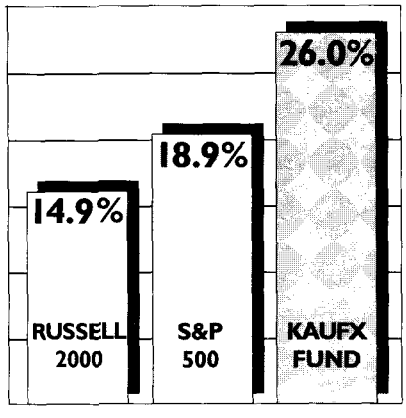

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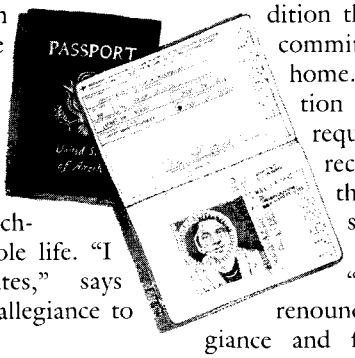
Loyalty Duel

Will the rise of dual citizenship create a world without patriotism?

JOHN J. MILLER

THREE seconds after midnight on March 20, a fax machine at the Mexican consulate in San Diego received a transmission from Enrique Morones, a U.S. citizen who was born and raised in San Diego. It was an application to obtain Mexican nationality. "I wanted to be first in line," says Morones. And he was. Under a Mexican law that went into effect on that date, Mexican nationality can be acquired by a citizen of a foreign country provided that he (or, as in the case of Morones, one of his parents) was born in Mexico.

Morones will not be allowed to vote in Mexican elections: technically, he will be a dual national, not a dual citizen. But when his new passport arrives in May, he will no longer be a foreigner in a foreign land when he visits his ancestral country. He will gain the right to travel freely in Mexico, to purchase property that aliens cannot own, and to benefit from the same inheritance laws as citizens. His new status will also solidify an emotional attachment he has felt his whole life. "I love the United States," says Morones, "but I feel an allegiance to both countries."



Mexico is not the first country to permit some form of dual citizenship; about fifty others currently allow it. In the last twenty years, dual citizenship has become a growth industry, especially in Latin American countries trying to strengthen ties to swelling emigrant communities in the United States. According to one estimate, about half a million children are born in the United States each year with automatic dual citizenship. But an unprecedented number of Americans will be affected by the new Mexican rules. On March 20, more than one million naturalized U.S. citizens became eligible for official Mexican nationality, as did the even more numerous U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrants.

The rise of dual nationality poses a significant challenge to the old idea that American citizenship is exclusive. To be sure, controversies over citizenship are nothing new. Among the primary causes of the War of 1812 were Britain's attempts to impress Americans into the Royal Navy. The British government simply refused to recognize that some of its former subjects had become U.S. citizens: once a British subject, always a British subject. This clashed with the Founding Fathers' idea that people could transfer their political loyalties from one nation to another on the condition that they made a solemn commitment to their new home. Since 1795, naturalization in the United States has required immigrants to recite an oath in which they abandon their personal foreign entanglements. Today, it reads: "I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or a citizen."

Many countries, however, do not consider this statement legally binding. And some naturalized Americans evidently don't take it very seriously. As many as 1,800 of them voted in Colombia's Senate elections in March. One U.S. citizen, Jesus R. Galvis, a city councilman in Hackensack, N.J., actually ran for a Colombian Senate seat and proposed to represent constituents in both countries at the same time. (He lost.) Even more U.S. citizens are expected to vote in Colombia's presidential election in May; about 10,000 are currently registered to vote there.

In 1996, the Dominican Republic started allowing Dominicans living abroad to vote in its elections (although, unlike Colombia, it insisted that they be within its borders when they cast their ballots). Many of New York City's numerous Dominicans took advantage of these rules in that year's presidential election, though one prominent New Yorker did not. City Councilman Guillermo Linares (D.), the first Dominican elected to office anywhere in the United States, made a very public point of not casting a Dominican ballot.

Mexico's new rules are relatively modest compared to those of some other countries; Ireland's law, passed in 1956, allows even the grandchildren of people born in Ireland to obtain dual citizenship. The Mexican provisions also may produce economic benefits on both sides of the border because they ease investment restrictions. But the Mexican law nonetheless poses serious risks. Due to the large numbers potentially involved—there are more than seven million Mexican born people living in the United States—it threatens, in a way that other countries' dual citizenship has not, to erode the sentiments that traditionally have allowed the United States to maintain national unity amid confounding levels of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity.

'The Mexicans may call it dual nationality, but it's really dual citizenship lite,' says Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies.

"The Mexicans may call it dual nationality, but it's really dual citizenship lite," says Mark Krikorian of the Washington-based Center for Immigration Studies. He equates membership in a political community to a marriage or a religious affiliation. "Those kinds of relationships really ought to be exclusive," he says. "If the mystic chords of memory mean anything, then people-

Mr. Miller is NR*'s national political reporter. The Free Press has just published his book,* The Unmaking of Americans: How Multiculturalism Has Undermined America's Assimilation Ethic.

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hood has to mean more than the assignment of legal privileges."

The Mexican law may ultimately threaten the legitimacy of our governing institutions. Noah Pickus of Duke University warns that dual citizenship could spur the development of supranational governing bodies to mediate between competing national claims. "We shouldn't necessarily be worried about the direct harms, such as whether we're about to go to war with Canada and who serves in which army," he says. "But we need to look at the potential long-term consequences, such as the question of how this affects the notion of self-government in the United States."

John Fonte of the Alexis de Tocqueville Institution in Arlington, Va., compares dual citizenship to the Holy Roman Empire. "This is like medieval electors who have power in more than one polity and are loyal to more than one constitutional order," he says. If Mexico grants voting rights to people who live outside its borders—and there is some pressure for it to do so—Fonte's analogy will be on target.

The U.S. Government has traditionally opposed dual citizenship. As recently as 1958, the Supreme Court ruled that voting in a foreign election justified the revocation of citizenship, even for Americans born in the United States. In the 1960s, however, the courts began to rule differently. In an important but little-noticed 1967 case, *Afroyim* v. *Rusk*, the Supreme Court essentially made it impossible to lose U.S. citizenship except through an explicit act of renunciation. Even if an American becomes a citizen of a foreign country, he will retain his U.S. citizenship unless he specifically disavows it.

Our government still officially frowns on dual citizenship, but nowadays the authorities don't do much about it. The Pentagon is currently preventing Republican congressional staffer Will Dwyer II, a native of Rochester, N.Y., from obtaining a security clearance on the grounds that he holds an Irish passport. In other cases, however, those in charge have looked the other way. In 1991, Marine colonel Bryan O'Connor took out Irish citizenship two weeks before commanding a Space Shuttle mission.

"I'm not sure we particularly like dual citizenship or approve of it," says Andrew Lluberes, a spokesmen for the

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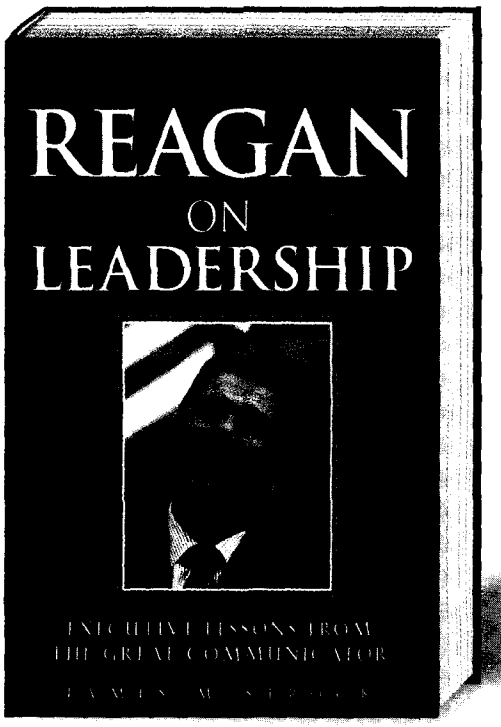

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Immigration and Naturalization Service, "but we recognize it." Dual citizenship has not sparked any reaction whatsoever in Congress—not a bill, not a speech, not even a "Dear Colleague" letter raising questions. "I'm still thinking about what it means," says Rep. Lamar Smith (R., Tex.), who heads the House immigration subcommittee.

In fact, there are several steps Congress can and should take to curb dual citizenship before it becomes all too clear what it means. Instead of passing new expatriation laws that would challenge the Warren Court decisions—and would be likely to get tossed out by the Rehnquist Court—it could impose civil or criminal sanctions on people who hold dual citizenship. Running for office or even voting in a foreign election, serving as a military officer or holding a high government position in a foreign country, or owning more than one passport could lead to fines or prison. Congress might also want to pursue treaties in which other countries would agree to bar American citizens—or simply people living in the United States—from voting in their elections.

Enrique Morones didn't concern himself with any of these larger questions when he applied for Mexican nationality. He attended a small ceremony at the Mexican Consulate, wearing an olive green sport coat, a red and white striped shirt, and a green tie—the colors of the Mexican flag. Not even immigration reformers, such as Rep. Lamar Smith (R., Tex.), are thinking about the issue. □

Saint George

The press has changed its mind about George Bush—for all the wrong reasons.

STEPHEN MOORE

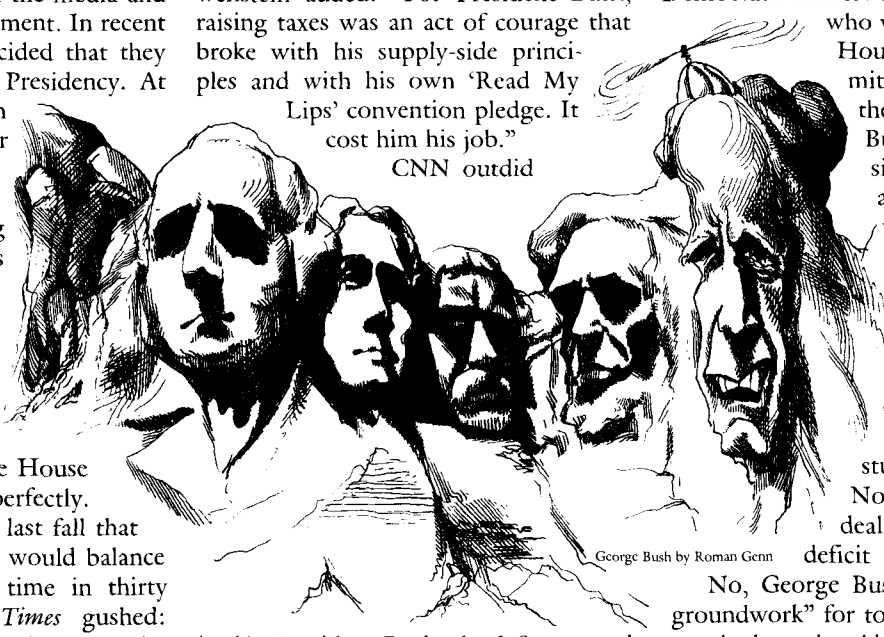
SUDDENLY, George Bush—the former President, not the son and would-be successor once removed—is the darling of the media and the Washington establishment. In recent months liberals have decided that they badly misjudged Bush's Presidency. At this pace, he will soon soar above Jimmy Carter on the Left's list of "near great Presidents."

Why this urge to hang a halo over St. George's head? Because the budget is now balanced, and the story cries out for a hero. Or better yet, a martyr. Bush, whose tax betrayal in 1990 cost him the White House in 1992, fits the profile perfectly.

When the news broke last fall that the Federal Government would balance its books for the first time in thirty years, the *New York Times* gushed: "George Bush was really the man who risked the most and paid the biggest price for cutting the deficit."

The *Wall Street Journal*'s Roger Lowenstein added: "For President Bush, raising taxes was an act of courage that broke with his supply-side principles and with his own 'Read My Lips' convention pledge. It cost him his job."

CNN outdid itself. "President Bush, the 2 Senate and 34 House Democrats who stuck their necks out for Bill Clinton's 1993 budget, and failed candidates for President like Walter Mondale," announced William Schneider on *Inside Politics*—"they are the unsung heroes of the balanced budget." Patriotic music swelled in the background, and Bernard Shaw actually broke into applause.



George Bush by Roman Genn

Mr. Moore is a contributing editor to NR.

> *'It is a testament to successful Bush policies that today the deficit is virtually erased.'*

Emboldened Bushites are emerging from their five-year exile to pat themselves on the back. "It is a testament to successful Bush policies that today the deficit is virtually erased," Bush Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady boasted in the *Wall Street Journal*. "The 1990 budget deal enacted spending cuts and tax increases that slashed the deficit by approximately $500 billion over five years."

The former President himself is joining the chorus, although with characteristic understatement. "I do think history will show that we laid the groundwork for some of this," he told the *New York Times*. "It would please me if that was recognized, because I was regarded as being out of touch."

And the praise is non-partisan. Democratic former Rep. Leon Panetta, who was chairman of the House Budget Committee in 1990, told the *Times*: "George Bush's willingness to sit down and negotiate that agreement was an important first step in reducing the deficit. He paid a political price, but it was the right thing to do."

All of this is the stuff of fairy tales. No, the 1990 budget deal did not cut the deficit by $500 billion. No, George Bush did not "lay the groundwork" for today's balanced budget. And no, breaking a promise—even in politics—is never "the right thing to do."

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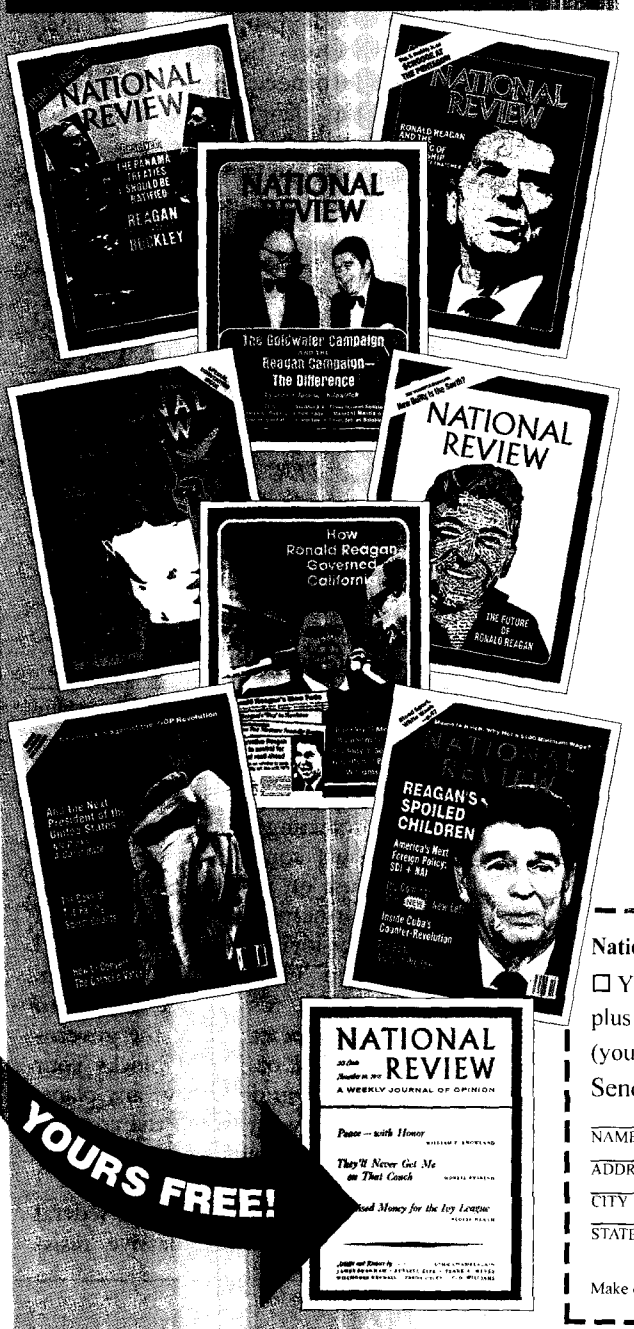

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This is at least the third time (but who's counting?) that Bush has flip-flopped on taxes. First in 1988 he pledged he would never raise taxes. Then in 1990 he raised them. Then in 1992 he said he was sorry, it was all a mistake, he would "never, ever do it again." Now in 1998 he says: Gee, I guess I was right after all.

Let's examine the record. When George Bush took office in January 1989 the budget deficit was rapidly falling. In Reagan's second term, it had fallen by more than half—from 6 to 2.8 per cent of GDP. The month Reagan stepped down the Congressional Budget Office projected a continued steady decline in the deficit to $100 billion by 1993. And this forecast—ten months before the fall of the Berlin Wall—did not take into account the decline in defense spending that would ensue from the end of the Cold War.

No, Nicholas Brady, the deficit did *not* decline following the Budget Deal of the Century—it exploded. When the Bush Administration began the deficit was $150 billion. When it ended, the deficit was $290 billion. From 1990 to 1994 it exceeded projections by more than half a trillion dollars.

How was this fiscal catastrophe possible? First, the economy performed so miserably under Bush that the tax hikes enacted as a result of the budget deal failed to raise a dime of additional revenue. The 1990 tax hikes were all pain, no gain. Coming just as a recession began, they sank the economy further into the red.

Second, the budget deal launched a massive spending spree. There were no budget cuts. Not a single government program was eliminated. After the budget deal, in the first year alone domestic expenditures rose by $100 billion, or 9.2 per cent. Thanks to the budget deal, George Bush will go down in history as the third largest spending president in the second half of the twentieth century.

So far from being a hero who saved the economy, George Bush is a good man who did a very bad thing. The budget is in surplus today not because he broke his promise, but because the economy is surging and the defense budget is falling. Peace and prosperity erased the deficit. These are not the legacies of George Bush or Bill Clinton. They are the legacies of Ronald Reagan. Just don't expect to see that story on CNN or in the *New York Times.* □

Specious Reform

Republicans are reforming the Endangered Species Act—but for whose benefit?

JESSE WALKER

LAST September, Sen. Dirk Kempthorne introduced the bill he hopes will be his legislative legacy: S-1180, the Endangered Species Recovery Act. The popular Idaho Republican is running for governor this year, and he would love to get credit for reforming the Endangered Species Act, a law much hated by his constituents. As the media have reported it, his bill pits private industry and property-rights activists against regulators and greens.

Don't believe it. The bill would indeed help certain industries, and the corporate lobbies know it. Several of them—the National Association of Homebuilders, the American Forest and Paper Association, the Building Owners and Managers Association—have heartily endorsed S-1180. But from the perspective of an embattled landowner, the bill is worse than useless: it would actually strengthen the hand of the regulators.

The Endangered Species Act as passed in 1973 was a far cry from the ESA as applied today. It merely outlawed the deliberate destruction of endangered species. Confronted with, say, a red-cockaded woodpecker, one could not "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect" it, nor "attempt to engage in any such conduct."

As written, the act did not prevent you from altering a creature's habitat. If an important habitat was threatened, the government was supposed to remedy this by *purchasing* the land. First the Fish and Wildlife Service issued regulations defining "harm" to include habitat modification. Then in 1982 Congress amended the act to deal with uses of land that might have the unintentional side-effect of killing or injuring members of an endangered species. In such cases, the Fish and Wildlife Service could issue a permit only if the developers produced a habitat conservation plan (HCP) showing how they would minimize the damage.

These conservation plans were to be required only under limited circumstances, when a particular use of land would "actually injure or kill an animal." They were supposed to make it easier for landowners to live with the act, not easier for the government to interfere with people's use of their property. Over time, however, the enforcers expanded their power, even though the language of the law remained the same.

Today, any activity that might be construed as altering an endangered species' habitat can trigger regulatory intervention, even if the animal actually lives miles from the property in question. In one infamous case, the Fish and Wildlife Service stopped a Texas couple, Marj and Roger Kruger, from building a home. Some golden-cheeked warblers had been found living, not on their land, but in some canyons nearby.

From the perspective of an embattled landowner, the bill is worse than useless.

Not only is this sort of intervention unjust, it actually runs counter to the goal of protecting endangered species. Say you own some land and plan to build a house on it. One day you come across a northern spotted owl, a Delhi Sands flower-loving fly, or the rare and precious San Francisco Mome Rath. Under the ESA, it's in your interest to dispose of the beast before the government gets wind of it and blocks your plans. Even if you don't have any plans, you still might want to kill the creature lest it someday wipe out the value of your property.

By the early 1990s, increasing federal intrusion was inspiring massive resis-

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tance to the ESA, in boardrooms as well as in backyards. After the 1994 election, outright repeal of the act seemed possible. At that point, President Clinton's interior secretary, Bruce Babbitt, "discovered" some "administrative flexibility" in the ESA. Radical reform was not necessary, he declared; he could just start enforcing the law differently. Suddenly, without statutory authority, the Interior Department transformed habitat conservation plans from a limited regulatory option into a license to cut decades-long deals with property owners, or even with entire states.

Under such a deal, a timber company, say, might have to set aside a certain portion of its land in perpetuity. It would have to survey its property and agree to a plan for conserving all the species it found, endangered and non-endangered. It would have to follow strict land-use controls, cutting its trees in such a manner that none of those species would be threatened for, say, fifty years. In exchange, the government would keep its hands off any land that was not set aside at the outset of the HCP. There would be a "no surprises" policy: as long as the timber company followed the habitat conservation plan, it would be immune to further restrictions on the use of its property.

Environmental groups hate the no-surprises doctrine, and some of them have filed suits against HCPs already in place as having no statutory authority. That makes our hypothetical timber company nervous.

Sen. Kempthorne's proposal is designed to calm it. S-1180 would make the no-surprises doctrine a matter of law, not regulatory whim. However, it does not provide compensation to landowners for lost property rights, nor does it replace those fuzzy words "harass" and "harm" with more precise ones. Worst of all, it makes explicit provision for HCPs. Far from curtailing the feds' power to regulate habitat modification—something that Congress has not heretofore authorized—S-1180 formally codifies it.

In short, the proposed reform would do nothing to protect small landowners who would be destroyed by the substantial costs of developing an HCP. Indeed, it would make it that much less likely that they will ever get rid of this threat. Small wonder the property-rights community doesn't care for the bill.

But the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition and the Endangered Species Coordinating Council, the two industry-supported lobbies for ESA reform, have warmly endorsed it. Many Republican senators support it too, and the *Wall Street Journal* has declared it a "necessary first step." This is not just a matter of different strategies for reaching the same goal. Many developers, large timber companies, and other big-business interests just don't want the same reforms small landowners want.

The status quo poses some problems for industry, but it also offers several advantages. Obtaining a permit under the ESA is an expensive hassle—the sort of thing a well-established business with a large legal staff can handle, but which cripples a small competitor. The same is true of habitat conservation plans: the bigger you are, the easier it is to survive them. Restrictive land-use plans also give market power to builders who have already completed their projects.

What's more, a small landowner's relationship to his land is different from a developer's or a big timber company's. A small landowner is attached to a particular piece of property. If the government takes it, it can't readily be replaced. A developer, or timber company, simply wants to build or cut; it doesn't really matter where, as long as he doesn't get stuck with an impossible plot of soil. So he's much more amenable to the government's reserving some portion of his land for its own projects. He's interested less in deregulation than in regulatory certainty.

By enshrining the no-surprises doctrine, Kempthorne's bill at least appears to provide that certainty. The big boys give the government greater regulatory powers, and the government gives them advantages over their smaller competitors. They also get to engage in what environmentalists call *greenwashing*: giving their normal pursuit of profit an eco-friendly veneer. A timber company that accedes to a habitat conservation plan can milk it for favorable publicity, whatever the actual ecological effects.

So it makes sense for the National Endangered Species Act Reform Co-

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alition—one of whose biggest supporters is the National Association of Homebuilders—to support the Endangered Species Recovery Act. Likewise for the Endangered Species Coordinating Council, one of whose biggest boosters is the American Forest and Paper Association, the voice of big timber. Neither coalition has much use for small landowners, apart from public relations. "They've written off the grassroots people," comments Myron Ebell, policy director of the pro-market Frontiers of Freedom Institute.

With the two most prominent reform groups embracing Kempthorne, groups that might have gone the other way have fallen into line. The old National Cattlemen's Association, dominated by small, independent ranchers, might have opposed the bill, but in 1996 it merged with the National Livestock and Meat Board. The new National Cattlemen's Beef Association is increasingly beholden to packing plants, beef marketers, and the chemical companies that produce growth hormones, antibiotics, and the like. It supports the bill, even though it would kill family ranches.

Meanwhile, property-rights groups have had a hard time getting the word out about their objections. The act's supporters learned to "talk like us," complains one activist. Witness a fact sheet Kempthorne's people have been distributing, declaring the senator's measure a "property rights bill of rights." The document offers specious but rhetorically powerful reasons for property-rights activists to get behind the bill.

It claims, for instance, that the law "prevents the Secretary [of the Interior] from denying information to property owners about species [on] a property owners [*sic*] land." This is accurate but misleading. It is true that Interior currently refuses to give out such information, making it impossible to verify the regulators' data and difficult to challenge their orders. And it is true that the Kempthorne bill would let an individual landowner file a Freedom of Information Act request. But, he could file it only about species on his own land. This does nothing to help families whose land is alleged to contain, not an endangered species, but a suitable habitat for a species that lives over the next hill.

But of what concern are those families to Kempthorne, or to the supporters of his bill? □

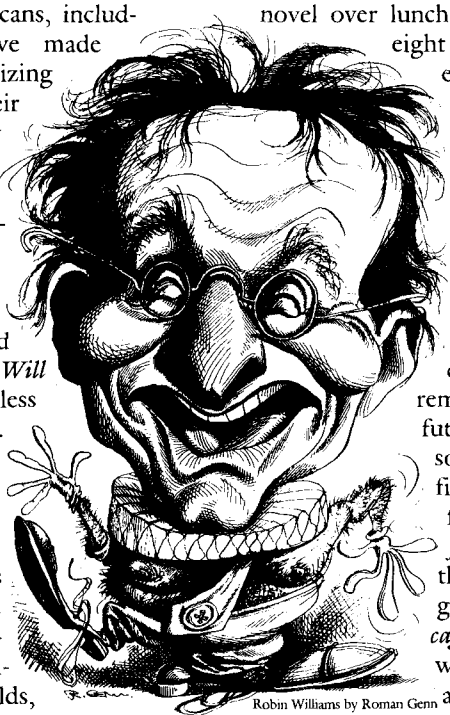
Court Jester

Robin Williams makes the establishment laugh–by telling it what it wants to hear.

MARK STEYN

ROBIN Williams didn't thank his beard on Oscar night, but he owes it a lot. It's a serious beard, kept in the drawer and brought out only for serious roles—doctors (*Awakenings*), professors (*The Fisher King*), therapists (*Good Will Hunting*). Clean shaven, Williams is a motormouth, rattling through quickfire impressions of everyone from Elvis (*Fathers' Day*) to Wm. F. Buckley Jr. (*Aladdin*). But that's no way to win an Academy Award. So, for the heavyweight stuff, his natural instincts have to be constrained by facial hair. Instead of letting his mouth run away with him, he lets his follicles.

For years, Americans, including Williams, have made stale jokes characterizing the French by their veneration of Jerry Lewis. But somehow America's—or at least the Academy's—veneration of Robin Williams seems far more telling. His bearded turn in *Good Will Hunting* is a shameless exercise in self-pity. One can forgive Tom Hanks whimpering under his stick-on lesions in *Philadelphia*: he's just a dramatic actor. But great comics—like Phil Silvers, W. C. Fields, even (telethons aside) Jerry Lewis—must have a streak of heartlessness: as Groucho Marx once noted, an audience will laugh at an actress playing a little old lady falling downstairs; for a professional comedian to find it funny, it has to be a real old lady. We all know, if only from Smokey Robinson, about the tears of a clo-ow-own/When there's no one aroun'. But Williams insists on showing us the tears of a clown when *everyone*'s aroun'. He's the Bill Clinton of comedians: they even have the same pain-feeling expression, the ostentatiously downturned mouth.



Robin Williams by Roman Genn

For those who haven't seen Williams's Oscar-winning performance, *Good Will Hunting* is about a genius, played by Matt Damon. The eponymous Will demonstrates said genius by memorizing a book simply by turning the pages and regurgitating a lot of information at high speed. This is indeed Hollywood's idea of a genius: there isn't a studio exec in town who wouldn't love a kid in the outer office who could read an entire novel over lunch and then pitch it in eight seconds. But the execs at Miramax agreed to do the film only if the therapist who draws the boy out was played by Williams.

Here's another Clintonian touch: just as every Clinton policy from highway construction to sludge removal is about "the future of our children," so too is every Williams film. He plays divorced fathers (*Mrs. Doubtfire*), would-be fathers (*Fathers' Day*), gay fathers (*The Birdcage*), fathers riddled with self-doubt (*Hook*) and, in *Good Will Hunting*, a surrogate father. But sooner or later, whatever variant of fatherhood Williams is practicing, we come to that grisly moment when he drops his quickfire, scattershot vocal mimicry and launches into a cloying baby-boomer homily about the importance of family. W. C. Fields would be horrified to discover that inside every comedian is a sensitive man wriggling to break free.

That's the Williams approach in a

Mr. Steyn is film critic for The Spectator.

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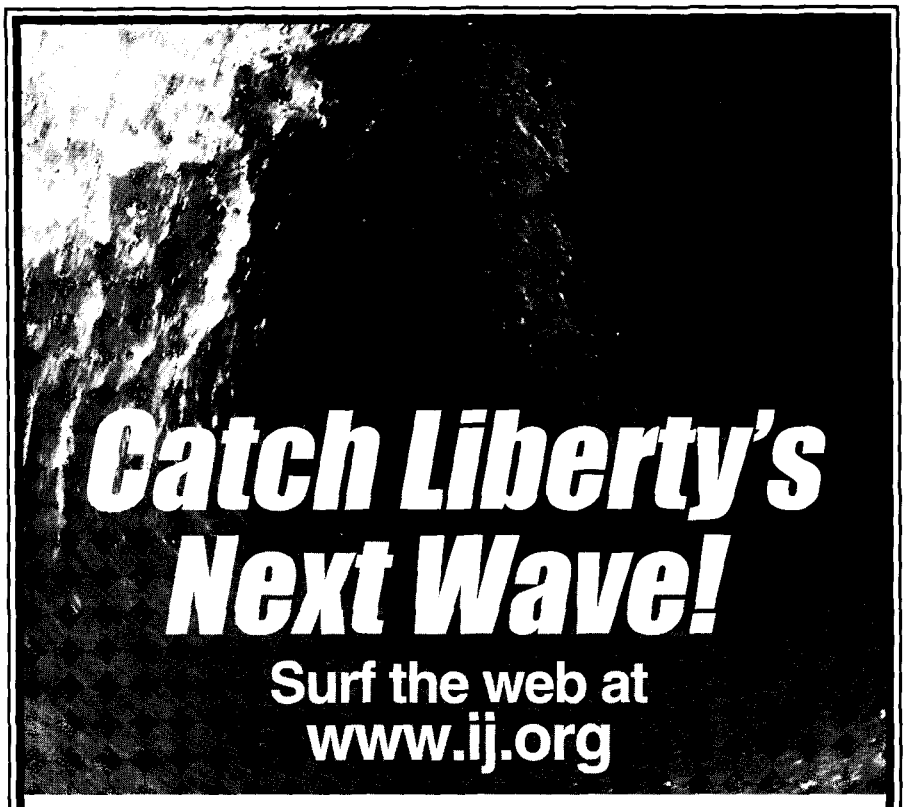
nutshell. Most comedy is pandering: it lets you know that you were right all along—about electronic bar-code scanners at the supermarket, or why men never put in a fresh roll of toilet paper, or whatever. Its greatest weakness is that it's scared to tell you things you don't already agree with: laughter, in the end, is approval. And, in our time, no one has ever needed approval more desperately than Robin Williams.

A year or two back, as evidence of how he's still dangerous, on the edge, pushing the envelope, etc., he described a routine he does about anti-abortion campaigners, in which he delivers a crack-addicted baby to a pro-life woman, who screams, "No! I don't want it!" He compared it, as an example of "risk-taking," to Lenny Bruce, immediately after Kennedy's assassination, doing jokes about Jackie trying to get out of the car. The difference, though, is obvious: at the time, most of Bruce's audience were outraged, and many of them would happily have assassinated *him*. Williams knew that in mocking those crazy pro-life types he was in no danger; he took it as read that the crowd would agree with him. He's "dangerous" only when it's safe to be so.

A similar paradox underpins his recent film work: no one has made vulnerability more exhibitionistic, descending in *Fathers' Day* into what, even by his own standards, are unprecedented levels of mawkishness and self-admiration. Here truly is a fitting court jester for the Clinton era: the more he professes to feel everybody else's pain, the more he advertises his own. The beard is working overtime in *Good Will Hunting*: Williams's therapist is a Vietnam vet, child-abuse survivor, recent widower, and community college loser stuck teaching in a community college due to the fact that his career stalled while his wife spent what appears to be 18 of their 20 years together on her deathbed.

If you want the essence of this performance, but in a twentieth of the time, go see Woody Allen's *Deconstructing Harry*. Williams has a small role as an actor who goes, literally, out of focus: whenever the camera tries to film him, he's all fuzzy and blurred. It's a cute joke—for five minutes. But, on the evidence of *Good Will Hunting*—where Williams's eyes are permanently fuzzy and blurry, as if he's always on the brink of tears—it has become a chronic condition. After the Oscar, heaven help us. □



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THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND THE GOP

Fall from Grace

The health of both the Religious Right and the GOP will depend on their ability to work out their differences.

RAMESH PONNURU

IS the Christian Right past its peak? That's fast becoming the conventional wisdom. Consider the evidence: The Republican National Committee voted in January to continue funding candidates who support keeping partial-birth abortion legal. Tom Bordonaro, the social conservatives' favored candidate in a special election for Congress in Santa Barbara, won a bitter primary but then lost the general election in March. The Christian Coalition had a rough year in 1997, with declines in fundraising and membership, senior-staff departures, and layoffs right before Christmas. (So far, 1998 has been better.) The Promise Keepers had to stop paying their staff for several months. Bill Clinton's poll numbers remain irritatingly high.

Republican leaders have borne the brunt of social conservatives' frustration. In early February, James Dobson (president of Focus on the Family, revered by many evangelicals, and a child psychologist) angrily charged that the Republican Party was taking Christian conservatives for granted and threatened to lead many of them out of it. After meeting in mid March with Dick Armey and Tom DeLay, the second- and third-highest-ranking House Republicans, Dobson blasted DeLay for being "argumentative, defensive, and accusatory." (The mercurial Dobson has since apologized.)

Newt Gingrich and Pat Robertson by Roman Genn

The Christian Coalition, stung by criticism of its informal support for Bob Dole during the 1996 primaries, is turning more confrontational, too, under new leadership. Founder Pat Robertson supported Dole because of his personal bond with the fellow veteran, but many activists blamed then–Executive Director Ralph Reed and his strategy of working with the party establishment.

The new mood explains why presidential aspirant Sen. John Ashcroft (R., Mo.) is courting the hard social Right with support for electronic privacy (encryption) and opposition to NATO expansion, both causes dear to leading activists Phyllis Schlafly and Paul Weyrich—and why some religious conservatives are questioning even *his* commitment. Gary Bauer, head of the Family Research Council, an influential spin-off of Dobson's group, is considering a presidential run of his own. Richard Land, head of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, says that religious conservatives are "not interested in candidates who are sympathetic to us, candidates who will listen to our concerns, candidates who are willing to work with us. They're looking for candidates who *are* us."

Social conservatives have, until now, been remarkably forbearing. They have not, to take the most striking example, insisted that Congress vote on a Human Life Amendment. But many of them are now questioning whether their political investment in the Republican Party has paid off. Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, perhaps the movement's leading intellectual, says, "A lot of people look around and say, Are we better off than we were 25 years ago? And the answer, with crashing obviousness if you look around, is, No, we are worse off. And this leads to great disillusionment." Mike Farris, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association, complains more pointedly, "Every election year there's promises, promises, promises, but no performance."

Meanwhile, many politicians, even ones sympathetic to the Religious Right, feel that too much is being asked of them. Sen. Rick Santorum (R., Pa.), the leading Senate opponent of partial-birth abortion, says he shares social

Mr. Ponnuru is NR*'s national reporter.*

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conservatives' "frustration at the pace of change" but adds, "I don't know how we could push [the issue] any harder." The relationship between social conservatives and the GOP, in short, is not exactly what Ephesians 5:22–33 describes as a good marriage. Can this marriage be saved? Perhaps—with counseling.

WHAT social conservatives most resent is the appearance that Republicans are embarrassed by them and their issues. Nominally pro-life politicians don't sponsor pro-life legislation or even make speeches about abortion. When social issues arise, these pols look at their shoes and mutter that there are other issues and some of their best friends are women. "You hear less and less about abortion from Republicans even as the party becomes more unanimously pro-life," observes Bauer ally Jeff Bell.

Social conservatives have to force the party to take up even popular issues like the ban on partial-birth abortion, and the GOP's campaign committees (the RNC, NRCC, and NRSC) routinely pressure candidates to avoid social issues. Republicans are willing to break their picks repeatedly on risky economic issues like entitlement reform, notes Bauer, but won't touch risky social issues like women in combat or judicial imperialism.

Bauer cites as an example the firestorm of criticism that greeted Green Bay Packer Reggie White. "He is not in trouble because of his inartful comments on race but because he said abortion and homosexuality are sins. . . . Nobody on the Hill said anything. And anybody else in public life, in entertainment, [was] taught a lesson on what happens if you dare to say these things. The party should have instinctively known it was on his side."

Worse, prominent members of the party establishment attack social conservatives as "intolerant extremists." Most recently Bob Dole said Illinois Senate candidate Peter Fitzgerald was "out there on the fringe," and then, when Fitzgerald won the primary, helpfully explained that he was referring only to the candidate's pro-life position. Dole blames social conservatives for his defeat in '96, and so he'll keep it up; the fact that "moderate" Republicans who use such terms make it easier for their Democratic opponents to do so against *them* in general elections never seems to stop them.

Some of the social conservatives' problems, however, are self-imposed. The second generation of social-conservative leaders is more intellectually and politically sophisticated than the first, without the baggage of having opposed civil rights. But their outreach to potential allies among minorities and especially Catholics has, they themselves agree, been disappointing (see "Religious Fight," p. 43). Religious conservatives have not found a language accessible to the general public. The phrase "secular humanism," for instance, draws rolled eyes from political elites and incomprehension from everyone else. The Southern Baptist campaign against Disney is illustrative of these conservatives' distance from most parents, who regard the company's product line as a refuge from the larger culture.

In addition, social conservatives tend to confuse tactical issues with substantive ones. Take the skirmish over the resolution, debated at the RNC's January meeting, to deny party funds to candidates who support partial-birth abortion. Many pro-lifers opposed the resolution because it focused on those few Republicans rather than on the vast majority of Democrats who support the procedure. But other pro-lifers treated the resolution as a matter of high principle—even though partial-birth abortions are no worse morally than any other abortions.

Thus the spectacle of one major activist who a) opposed the decision to make partial-birth abortion a legislative issue in the first place on moral grounds, b) fought for the resolution, and c) is now threatening retaliation against the resolution's opponents, whom Tom Bethell described in *The American Spectator* as pro-life "weaklings"—including Rep. Henry Hyde (R., Ill.), Betsy DeVos, and Dan Lungren, some of the leading champions of the pro-life cause. There aren't a lot of them to purge.

What social conservatives most resent is the appearance that Republicans are embarrassed by them and their issues.

Social conservatives have also picked needless fights with economic conservatives on issues like trade. Social conservatives claim the party leadership pays more attention to the concerns of economic conservatives. But, says Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform, "it's not as if economic conservatives have been walking away with candy from the store." Over their objections, government has grown since the Republicans took Congress, and even the tax cuts have mostly gone to social-conservative causes like the child tax credit. The important division isn't between social and economic conservatives, but between conservatives (without prefixes) and the GOP establishment.

If all conservatives united behind one presidential candidate in 2000, they could win or at least tug the party rightward. But for social conservatives on their own to choose one champion, as Paul Weyrich urges, would merely dissuade the others from courting them, and probably limit that candidate's appeal to other constituencies. "It is hubris to think that a bunch of leaders can make that kind of decision for voters," argues Bauer. "I don't see anything in the last twenty years that should convince conservatives to decide early. I think every time we've done that we've created an ingrate."

Bauer's possible candidacy raises concerns of its own. Some of his admirers fear its effect on his organization. Even his legislative lobbyist, Marty Dannenfelser, concedes that speculation about his candidacy has led some congressmen to dismiss his criticisms, probably unfairly, as political posturing. In any case, the role of the activist who applauds party figures who move in his direction is hard to balance with that of the candidate who emphasizes how far they still have to go.

Social conservatives have had problems at the congressional as well as the presidential level. Almost all Republi-

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cans expected too much after 1994, but social-conservative groups seem to expect the Hill to do their work for them. Marshall Wittmann of the Heritage Foundation, who was active in last year's fight to defund the National Endowment for the Arts, says, "The House leadership manipulated it every which way to do what we wanted." But when the Senate saved the NEA, "social conservatives mobilized nary a phone call." Yet Dobson includes the NEA in his list of Republican failings.

And Republican legislators can't deliver on social conservatives' priorities when they don't really have any. I asked Dannenfelser his top three priorities for the year.

Democrats for Life

JOSEPH A. BARRETT

IN a high-profile St. Patrick's Day primary election in Illinois, Peter Fitzgerald, a pro-life outsider seeking the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate, defeated Loleta Didrickson, the pro-choice candidate of the GOP machine. The race demonstrated the continued strength of pro-lifers in the GOP, even if the party's establishment sometimes seems to have no use for them.

But Fitzgerald's upset wasn't the only pro-life victory in Illinois that day. Glenn Poshard, a downstate pro-life, pro-gun Democratic congressman, captured his party's nomination for governor. Poshard's win is a sign of what may be the most important current trend in abortion politics: the re-emergence of the pro-life Democrat.

Only six years ago Pennsylvania's governor Bob Casey, fresh off a historic million-vote plurality in his re-election, had the door slammed in his face at the Democratic National Convention. It looked then—and especially when Casey failed to mount a primary challenge to Bill Clinton in 1996—as if the Democrats were kissing off pro-lifers for good. The number of pro-life Democrats in prominent positions had been steadily dwindling over the past decade, and Casey seemed to be the last one with a national constituency.

In the 99th Congress, there were 95 pro-life Democrats in the House of Representatives (out of a total of 255 Democrats) and a dozen in the Senate. Today, the pro-life contingent among House Democrats is down to 37 and there are only 3 pro-life Democratic senators. A dozen years ago, there were 7 pro-life Democratic governors (including Bill Clinton). Today there are none.

But 1998 offers evidence that the trend is reversing. Poshard could well become Illinois's first pro-life governor since *Roe* v. *Wade*, and Ray Flynn is at least as likely to be the next governor of Massachusetts. Flynn, formerly mayor of Boston and ambassador to the Holy See, is a loyal Clintonite—except on abortion. If he wins the nomination, he will be the favorite to defeat the pro-abortion Republican incumbent Paul Cellucci.

Massachusetts isn't the only place where a Democratic victory would mean a pro-life advance. In Pennsylvania, former congressman Don Bailey, with help from labor unions driven by their own pro-life members, is seeking the Democratic gubernatorial nomination against a party-endorsed pro-choice candidate. If Bailey makes it past the May 19 primary, he has a chance of upsetting what was supposed to be the near-automatic re-election of pro-choice governor Tom Ridge.

Also in Pennsylvania, two pro-life Democrats, Richard Orloski and William Lloyd, are competing for the chance to run against pro-choice Republican senator Arlen Specter. In both the gubernatorial and the senatorial races, the Democrats will be underdogs, but their position on abortion will lead some Republicans to vote for them.

One pro-life Democrat in Pennsylvania sure to win this fall is Pat Casey (son of the still-popular former governor), who is running for the seat now held by retiring Republican Rep. Joe McDade. National Democratic officials, sensing a victory here, held an early fundraiser for young Casey and even helped talk a primary opponent out of running.

Another likely Democratic pickup is in Idaho, where pro-lifer Richard Stallings expects to regain the congressional seat he held during the Reagan–Bush era—a seat that his successor, Republican Mike Crapo, easily won and kept in three races against pro-choice Democrats. (Crapo is leaving the House in order to run for the Senate.)

National Democratic officials may finally realize they they have been throwing away House races by running pro-choice candidates in pro-life districts. The party can no longer afford to ignore all the pro-life voters from the ranks of union members and public-sector employees, all the Northern Catholics and white Southerners who will vote for a pro-life Republican even though it means begging the forgiveness of six generations of Democratic ancestors.

Democrats have been throwing away House races by running pro-choice candidates in pro-life districts.

Of course, this doesn't mean that the Democrats are becoming a pro-life party—just that they they are getting smarter. In its effort to take back the House this year, the party is running pro-life challengers against vulnerable pro-life Republican incumbents in Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Kentucky, and Minnesota.

The Republican establishment's attitude toward pro-life voters has always been: "They have nowhere else to go." In more and more races, they now do. □

Mr. Barrett is deputy director of pro-life activities for the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

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"Well, we have certainly I guess on the sanctity of life we would like to see them pass the partial-birth ban and start looking at some additional pro-life measures . . ." He listed five more initiatives, some of which haven't even been introduced as bills, and a while later added three more.

When the activists do have priorities, they aren't the same ones. They briefly united around the Religious Freedom Amendment proposed by Rep. Ernest Istook (R., Okla.), but now they're split again. Ditto on Republicans' efforts to defund groups that perform abortions or lobby for their legalization abroad. The House leadership had to knock some heads together to get that provision into the bill, but now some of the social-conservative groups are neutral on it because it also pays UN dues (in an attempt to avoid a veto). Perhaps coordination will improve now that Paul Weyrich has started holding regular meetings of social conservatives for that purpose.

IF social conservatives developed a legislative agenda and a detailed game plan for achieving it, they could hold specific people accountable for getting a bill out of committee or scheduling a floor vote. Instead they've taken the easier path, one well trodden by Jesse Jackson vis-à-vis the Democrats: riling up the party's base when some wish list isn't achieved. It's as if they all missed the episode of *Schoolhouse Rock* on "How a Bill Becomes a Law." Says one exasperated House leadership aide, "You can't just put an issue in your newsletter and expect it to become law."

Dobson includes the failure to implement school choice in D.C. in his indictment of the GOP. But House leaders have pushed the issue vigorously: they twisted arms, brought congressmen back from airports, and held the voting open an extra 45 minutes; the measure passed by one vote. Not quite enough to override a Clinton veto. Says Rep. Jim Talent (R., Mo.), "There isn't a problem we have that wouldn't be solved by electing more conservatives."

One way to do that is to mount primary challenges to liberal incumbents in safe Republican seats, like Sherwood Boehlert (N.Y.) and Fred Upton (Mich.). The conservative groups don't do much of that. They could start by helping Kansas state GOP chairman David Miller, a savvy Christian conservative, unseat liberal Gov. Bill Graves. Threats don't work unless they're delivered on.

Which brings us to Dr. Dobson. He says, "I think what I'm doing is doing [Republicans] a favor" by alerting them to social-conservative unrest. But is he doing himself a favor? His threat to leave the party is no threat at all to the sizable faction of the GOP that would like nothing better. Ralph Reed and Gary Bauer had a useful good-cop/bad-cop routine with the GOP: Reed got Christian conservatives a place at the table, and Bauer made it worth having by reminding them to leave from time to time. Pat Robertson or Chuck Colson may try to fill the good-cop role, but right now it's vacant.

Odds are that social conservatives and the GOP will work through this rough patch in their marriage. The risks of drifting apart are too great for either partner. For Republicans, the risk is that evangelical Protestants will revert to the political quietism they maintained for most of this century. If they leave the scene, so does the Republican majority. As Land says, "This is the only movement in the Republican Party that has soldiers."

The flip-side risk is that evangelicals are now so thoroughly enmeshed in the Republican Party that they *won't* leave. Dobson's threat gained some attention for social-conservative grievances—Tom DeLay is convening a "Values Summit" in early May—but if Republicans pick up seats this fall despite all the dire warnings, that attention won't last long.

In any marriage, each spouse has to work past the other's unalterable flaws. Republican politicians will often be timid, and some social conservatives are going to be unreasonable. Congressional Republicans can probably hold the marriage together this year with roll-call votes on school choice, the marriage penalty, partial-birth abortion, and the NEA. Social conservatives, meanwhile, should remember that this Congress can't be expected to enact a policy "revolution." Its real fault has been in not acting strategically to advance the conservative cause—but that objection applies to social conservatives, too. In politics as in policy, good intentions are never enough. □

Religious Fight

KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ

IT was supposed to be a match made in heaven. In September 1995 the Christian Coalition started a new arm called the Catholic Alliance, a form of outreach meant to add to the quarter of a million Catholics who were already members of the one-and-a-half-million-member Christian Coalition. The timing seemed providential. In the wake of Pope John Paul II's call for ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*, Catholic and evangelical leaders had just issued the unprecedented statement "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium"—defining their shared goals in an increasingly secular culture.

Now the Catholic Alliance has been divorced from the Christian Coalition, whose hopes of Catholic outreach seem in retrospect to have been hopelessly naïve. Catholics, the nation's largest unaligned voting bloc, and arguably the most disorganized, weren't about to answer to Pat Robertson.

For reasons of style, theology, and history, a political alliance of evangelicals and Catholics will remain difficult to forge, which means these two crucial blocs of culturally conservative voters will remain divided at best, distrustful and even hostile at worst. Some of the tensions are as old as the Reformation. But others owe more to the different sensibilities of the two camps.

There is reason to doubt that Catholics will ever have an effective public-policy organization on the model of the Christian Coalition—because as soon as such a group took

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a political position some bishop would be sure to explain why it wasn't the true "Catholic" one. This is the inevitable result of the hierarchical nature of the Church, something evangelicals don't have to worry about. Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, editor of *First Things* and one of the founders of the ECT movement, points out that "Catholics are international, in the sense of belonging to the Catholic and catholic Church. Evangelicals tend to be congregational and local. Catholics have a sense of heritage and community. Evangelicals have direct access to the Bible."

"Most evangelicals and Catholics have never really had a reason to or the occasion to get along," explains Richard Cizik, policy analyst for the National Association of Evangelicals. "It would be interesting to survey how many friends and neighbors evangelicals have who are Catholic. My suspicion is that they don't have many."

This unfamiliarity can make for uncomfortable moments when evangelicals and Catholics join together. At the Promise Keepers rally in Washington last year, conservative women from Washington family groups—led primarily by the Family Research Council—set up a small cheerleading squad to counter the protest by the National Organization for Women. The friendly chanting was fine, but when it came time to hold hands, sing, and read from the Bible, the handful of Catholics tried to disappear into the background. "This just isn't for me," one twenty-something Catholic remarked as her evangelical sisters sang "Kumbaya"—"but at least I know the words to this one."

These minor differences matter in the aggregate. "The bulk of culturally conservative Catholics are reluctant to jump on the ecumenical bandwagon," explains congressional staffer and veteran pro-lifer Michael Schwartz. "There are just too many differences in tone and priorities. The divergence shows when it comes to the issue of gay rights." Catholics don't like creating new rights for gays, but they aren't as likely to harp on the evils of homosexuality as evangelicals are. "To the Catholic it is just one more sin."

And, of course, there are deeper splits. The Evangelical and Catholics Together statement was conceived at a 1992 meeting of evangelicals and Catholics originally convened to discuss rising tensions between the two elsewhere in the world, particularly in Latin America. Hoping to avoid more Belfasts, those assembled began to address "the scandal of conflict between Christians [that] obscures the scandal of the cross, thus crippling the one mission of the one Christ." Two years later the statement emerged. "However imperfect our communion with one another, however deep our disagreements with one another, we recognize that there is but one Body of Christ."

ACCORDING to some evangelicals, therein lies the ECT's first flaw—assuming that Roman Catholics are part of the Body of Christ. In *Modern Reformation* magazine, a publication of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, ACE vice chairman Michael Horton warns: "[As long as] Rome continues to uphold the Decrees and Canons of the Council of Trent, all individual members of that body who follow those decrees . . . continue to stand in opposition to the unchanging Gospel of Christ. If they stray from the official teaching of Rome, either from ignorance or in opposition to those statements, they may be regarded as brothers and sisters in Christ."

Catholic Alliance director Keith Fournier, a self-described "evangelical Catholic" who has devoted his life to "building bridges between evangelicals and Catholics," maintains that such Catholics-are-not-Christian sentiments "have gone the way of the dinosaur." Unfortunately, despite the efforts of many evangelicals, not all these dinosaurs are extinct.

John MacArthur is a radio evangelist (his program, *Grace to You*, is carried by over five hundred stations worldwide) and pastor to a flock of some eight thousand at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California. In a foreword to a book laying out arguments against ECT, MacArthur reminds readers that "the very thing we differ on is the Gospel itself—the very things that distinguished true Christianity from damning heresy (Galatians 1:8–9). We dare not gloss over this matter of eternal significance." This Easter, a Virginia Beach pastor attacked Roman Catholicism from his pulpit, to an assembly of four hundred, calling it "a false religion" and the "mother of harlots."

There is still the small matter that parts of the Christian Right suspect Catholics are in league with the devil.

Christian bookstores have lots of books explaining Catholicism—but not exactly in the spirit of brotherhood. *Graven Bread* attacks the "Adoration of the Wafer." The fringe book *The Priest, the Woman, and the Confessional* tells the story of young women deflowered by their confessors; its author is a former Jesuit priest. And there are even comic books explaining how President Lincoln's assassination was a Vatican conspiracy.

Despite all this, at least evangelicals and Catholics are talking. For too long, "both evangelicals and Catholics have been working off caricatures of one another," says Michael Horton. Debate continues on the second installment of ECT, "The Gift of Salvation," which signers hope will bring evangelicals and Catholics another step closer together. But don't expect a grand alliance any time soon. Mike Schwartz puts it starkly: "In some ways James Carville and his style are more likely to appeal to a Catholic than evangelicals do."

There is still the small matter that parts of the Christian Right suspect that Catholics are in league with the devil. A popular evangelical book, *Romanism: The Relentless Roman Catholic Assault on the Gospel of Jesus Christ!*, warns readers: "To not oppose Roman Catholicism is to not oppose the very house of Satan!" Meanwhile, production is beginning on a movie based on a fictional series that has been a best-seller on the Christian book market—the *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye (end-times scholar and husband of Beverly LaHaye, founder of Concerned Women for America) and Jerry Jenkins. Slated for release in the fall of 1999, the series tracks the rise of the Anti-Christ, who turns out to be the Secretary General of the United Nations. His right-hand man just happens to be the Pope. □

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

April 25, 1998

Dear Rusty,

Sorry it's taken me so long to write. As you know, I usually e-mail you every other week (it's much cheaper than buying stamps), and my usual routine is to wait for America Online to send me one of their free disks—you know, the kind they tuck into every magazine and send out with the junk mail?

See, what I do is, I sign up for the "50 Free Hours" or whatever the giveaway is this time, join up with a new screen name (Veep1@aol.com or Waitin4-00@aol.com were some of my recent screen names) and presto! I've got 50 free hours of unlimited e-mail and Internet browsing time! Total cost to me: zero!

But for some reason the el cheapo types at AOL haven't sent us a new disk, and my old 50 hours are up. I used them to file my tax returns electronically. If you haven't filed that way, Rusty, you should. It's such a breeze. And so fast! Let me tell you, if you've got a really simple tax return, uncluttered by a lot of charitable deductions and so forth, electronic filing is the way to go! People tell me that a more complicated return takes more time, but to them I say, "Simplify."

So I gave up waiting for a free AOL disk and thought, "What the heck? Why not just write the guy the regular way, pouch it down to Brazil, then get one of the embassy people to zip it through the office Pitney-Bowes. Total cost to me: zero!"

I'm sitting up on the dais right now, at the White House Correspondents' Dinner and I'm pretty nervous, so I think I'd better keep busy. I foolishly didn't eat anything today because I knew that Tipper and I would be coming here, having a free dinner, and I figured, "Why fill up on our own food, when we're about to eat for free?" but I'm kind of regretting that decision now. I'm not regretting the sound principle of thrift, mind you, just the fact that this is a pretty tense evening, and I think having something in my stomach would have been a good idea.

It started this morning, as I was getting ready. I was busily coloring the buttons on my white shirt (if you use a magic marker to color them black, then the buttons look like shirt studs, and you can wear a regular white shirt to a black-tie event and not have to shell out good money on a dress shirt. Plus, the magic marker washes off the buttons pretty easily, so it's like getting two shirts for the price of one—cost of regular white shirt: $45.00; cost of "dress" shirt: zero!) when I heard on the news that Bill was definitely going to come to the Correspondents' Dinner.

I knew that he was planning to come, of course. Even when he found out that Paula Jones was coming too, he was pretty adamant about attending. And the press was pretty supportive of his decision, too. Some of them even called it "courageous," though as Tipper pointed out, it was a lot more courageous of Hillary, considering what happened the last time Bill Clinton and Paula Jones were in a hotel together.

So you can see why I'm so tense. I've been sitting up here for a few minutes, wondering what to do to get my mind off the awkwardness of the evening. That's when I decided to use the time to write my old pal, Rusty. I told one of the waiters to dash off and get me a couple of the complimentary memo pads that the hotel puts by the pay phones, and one of the complimentary pencils that are usually around, and in a flash he was back and I was scribbling away.

Which brings me to the point of my letter. I know that times are a little tough down there, Rusty. The scientific research that you and the Institute do in Brazil is crucial to the well-being of our entire planet. It's not just about today, Rusty. It's about tomorrow. It's about our children.

In your last letter, you asked if I could maybe donate something to the foundation that supports your important work in the rain forest. I'm ashamed that you even had to ask. Of course you can count on my—and Tipper's—complete support. The work you do is too important to shortchange. I'm pleased to be able to enclose a check for US$10.00. I only wish it could have been more.

The waiter who brought the pads and pencil is hovering around behind me. I think he wants a tip, but he can wait forever as far as I'm concerned. All he did was bring me some free stuff. Some people, huh, Rusty?

Well, looks like the awards portion of the evening is over. Bill's up next. During the standing ovation, I'm planning to slip some sugar packets into Tipper's purse. And I'm definitely taking the salmon home for lunch tomorrow. Total cost to me: zero!

Your pal, Al

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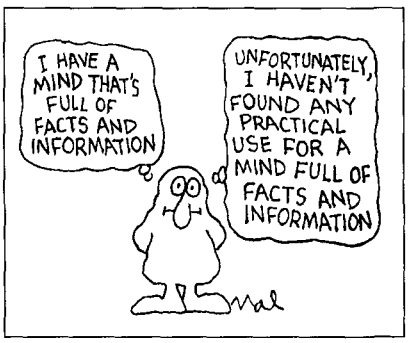
help


I HAVE A MIND THAT'S FULL OF FACTS AND INFORMATION
UNFORTUNATELY, I HAVEN'T FOUND ANY PRACTICAL USE FOR A MIND FULL OF FACTS AND INFORMATION
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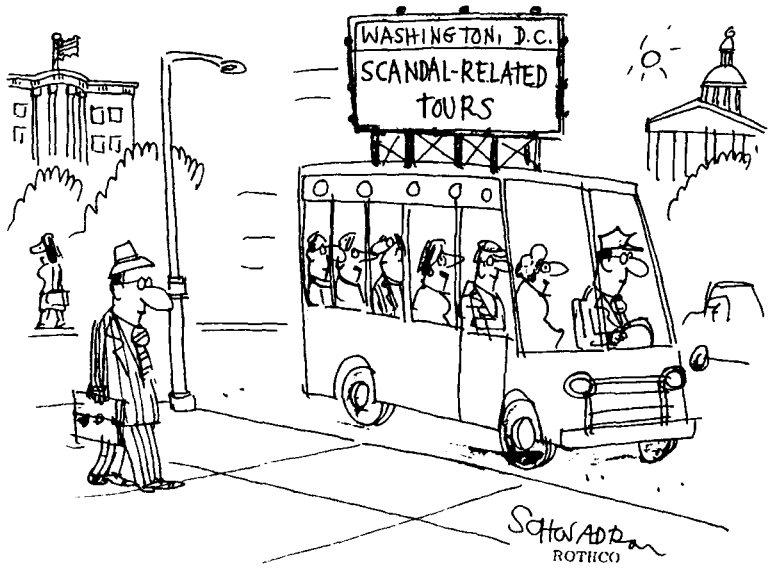

Why They Perspire

Tobacco taxes fill a need.
Next April, should the flow recede
Or, God forbid, go up in smoke,
Empurpled liberals would choke
As Mr. Clinton's programs fade.
There's no cash cow in marmalade.

—W. H. von Dreele

"If that's my wife, tell her I'm in favor of going home in principle."

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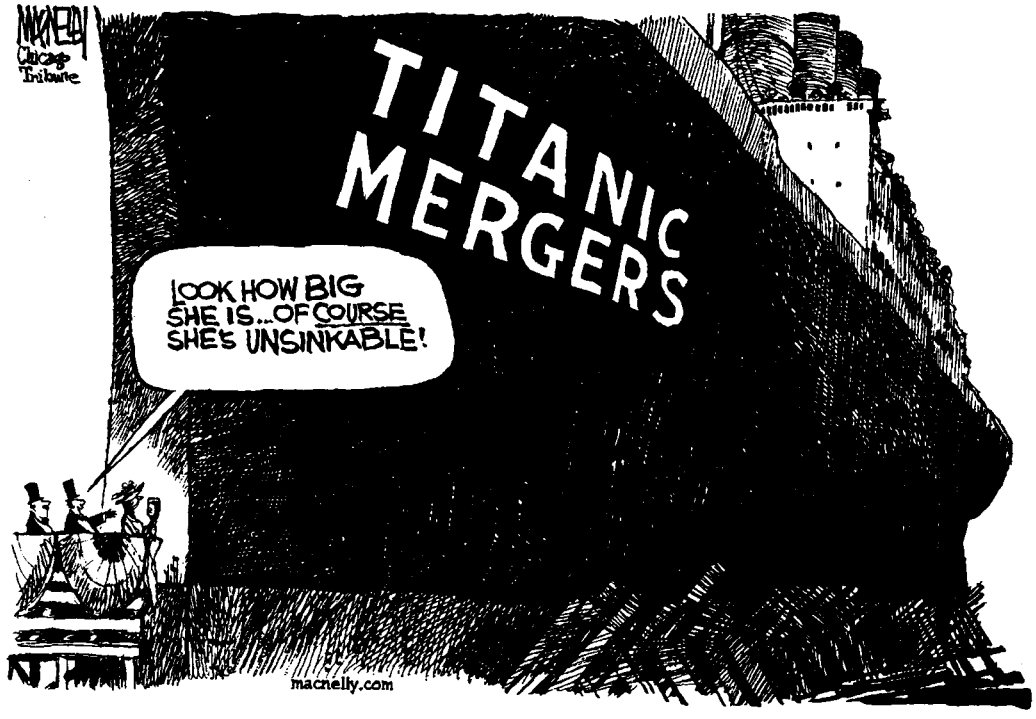
TRENCH WARFARE



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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Green Goo? No Problem

DANIELLE CRITTENDEN

WHEN my first child was born nearly seven years ago, I, like millions of daughters before me, of course knew much more than my mother about caring for babies. After all, I'd read the books of virtually every modern baby expert—an accomplishment I would remind my mother of whenever she offered a tentative suggestion. "I used a pacifier with both you and your brother . . . ," she would begin, ever so gently. Good grief, I'd sigh, wasn't she aware of the *controversy* over pacifiers? If she'd kindly refer to Penelope Leach on the subject—you might as well offer the baby a *cigarette*, for goodness' sake. And so it went.

One day my mother made the mistake of mentioning Dr. Spock. "You know, I didn't have a pediatrician," she said, betraying a hint of exasperation. "I just followed Dr. Spock . . ." Great, I thought, Dr. Spock—whose book I had punctiliously not read. The guy was ancient. Why not just bring out the hot cups and leeches? Undeterred, my mother went to the bookstore and returned with a recent paperback edition of *Baby and Child Care*. It was "for myself," she insisted, and she quietly read it while the baby napped.

Dr. Spock: An American Life, by Thomas Maier (Harcourt Brace, 528 pp., $30)

Then one of those weird things that experienced mothers know all about happened: the baby suddenly ran a fever; green goo emerged from one of her many leaky orifices; she cried unceasingly *for no apparent reason*. I turned to my gurus: Penelope Leach, T. Berry Brazelton, *What to Expect the First Year*, etc. Not a word about green goo! Do I need an ambulance? Is 102 degrees serious? And there, on the sidetable, was Dr. Spock—blessed old Dr. Spock!—who not only knew exactly what was wrong with the baby, but knew exactly what the mother was feeling about what was wrong with the baby. Ah yes, green goo. Nothing to worry about—just what shade of green is it precisely? . . . Like millions of new mothers over the past fifty years, I was won over by Dr. Spock's kindly bedside manner and followed his advice to the letter. It worked perfectly. I read him from cover to cover, while my mother—like generations of mothers before her—clamped her teeth upon her tongue to prevent herself from saying, "I told you so."

Katrin Yukhvid

Still, I was left puzzled by some strange interjections into this otherwise sensible, straightforward manual on child care. Why, for instance, were there these sections about the importance of participating in anti-nuclear marches? My mother-in-law, who also swore by Spock, had an edition from the late 1950s so well thumbed it was held together by rubber bands. There was nothing about marching there.

I was equally puzzled by Dr. Spock's reputation for "permissiveness." Most of the time, he was refreshingly stern on the subject of child discipline. After reading Brazelton and Leach, for instance, a mother might shrink from ever raising her voice to her child lest she crush her little precious's self-esteem. But Dr. Spock was no sucker for children's wiles: He took the full measure of his tiny subjects, understanding that even very small children are capable of mischief and defiance as much as they are of sweetness and love, and he always recommended that a parent maintain a firm upper hand. But then along with these welcome, authoritarian opinions would be a little essay on America's "ruthless[ness] with dealing with the Indians . . . [and its denial of] justice to groups with different religious or political views."

Spock's death this March, at age 94, embodied the same odd contradictions as his book. At the time, his publisher, Pocket Books, was preparing to bring out the fiftieth-anniversary edition of *Baby and Child Care*. But the celebratory mood had been dampened when the now-bedridden old man and his second wife, Mary Morgan, went public with their financial woes, which had left one of the best-selling authors of all time in a state of impoverishment. It was the details of this impoverishment, as recounted by the *New York Times*, that best represented Spock's eccentric nature. Here was this wise New England doctor, who had been born during Teddy Roosevelt's Administration and worn a dark blue suit virtually his entire life, complaining that he could no longer afford to pay his macrobiotic chef, yoga instructor, shiatsu masseuse, or twice-weekly psychotherapist.

I had got in the habit of recommending Spock to friends with new babies,

Miss Crittenden is editor of The Women's Quarterly.

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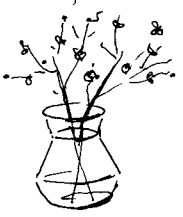
advising them simply to skip over the political parts. This was what everybody else in America was doing as Spock's long and bizarre career as the nation's First Baby Doctor progressed. Were we all wrong? That's what Thomas Maier claims in his authorized biography, *Dr. Spock: An American Life*. Maier argues that Spock's political views—which did not form until he was past sixty—are essential to understanding the man as a reflection of the century his life nearly spanned. Spock's life, writes Maier, was "the story of America during the twentieth century with all its tumultuous changes and sweeping redefinitions."

Late in life, Dr. Spock could no longer afford to pay his macrobiotic chef, yoga instructor, or psychotherapist.

That is the nice way to put it. More accurately, for more than ninety years, Spock continually fell victim to the rage of the moment, whether it was progressive schooling, Freudianism, ballroom dancing, or civil disobedience. Spock was born in 1903, in New Haven, Connecticut, the eldest of six children of an employee in J. P. Morgan's railroad company and a severe mother who had her own odd notions of raising children (such as making them sleep on the porch for the "fresh air," even during the harshest winter nights, and calling them "such piddling creatures!" when they complained). In the Twenties, he went to Yale and joined the rowing team, which won a gold medal for America in the 1924 Olympics. In the Thirties, he moved to New York and became enthralled with Freud and Marx. By the 1950s, he was a Midwestern pediatrician whose manner, at once folksy and straitlaced, appealed to the parents of the baby boomers. In the 1960s, he became a social activist; in the 1980s, a health nut and crusader against Ronald Reagan's policies.

Alas, Spock's vulnerability to the fad of the moment often made a fool of him. The Freudian theories he popularized—bringing to suburban dinner conversation everywhere such terms as "Oedipus complex" and "sibling rivalry"—had disastrous consequences in his private life. Spock and—at his urging—his first wife, Jane, and their sons, and later the sons' wives, spent virtually their entire lives in therapy, fruitlessly trying to understand themselves and their disagreements in Freudian terms, with the result typical of most therapy: they ended up getting nowhere but feeling very aggrieved with one another. When, in the 1960s, Spock took an interest in nuclear disarmament and then later the Vietnam War, he became embroiled with the most extreme elements of the peace movement, allying himself with the Black Panthers and Communists, only to become one of the Boston 5, indicted for criminal conspiracy (he was found guilty, but the decision was reversed on appeal in 1969). And when sexual morality changed in the early 1970s with the onset of feminism (Spock was startled by the early feminist denunciation of him, and hastily revised his "outdated" views on men and women to keep up), he eagerly shed his prudish Victorian upbringing, dumped his wife of fifty years, and took up with a blonde hippie four decades his junior with whom he went sailing, naked.



But the most shattering revelation—the sort of large, juicy hypocrisy for which people buy biographies—was that this trusted father figure was really a tyrannical dad to his own children, and a not-much-better husband to his long-suffering first wife, who eventually became addicted to pills and booze. Maier quotes Spock's younger son, John, saying that when he was a teenager, he was "afraid of him [Spock]. He was a scary person, really scary. Never anything physical. But always instead with judgment and criticism, with a constant kind of monitoring of behavior." Neither son can remember being hugged or kissed by him.

Self-absorbed, egotistical, indifferent to the well-being of his loved ones—this is the portrait that emerges of the beloved Dr. Spock from the five hundred pages of Maier's biography. Hmm, no wonder he was dubbed the father of the Baby Boom Generation. He should have stuck to toilet training. □

Gay Rites

FLORENCE KING

BACK in the Cold War, whenever I had to review an unreadable book, I always comforted myself with the thought, "Maybe the Russians will drop the Bomb and I won't have to finish reading this." Those were the days. This time, stuck with *A Pilgrim's Way: The Personal Story of the Episcopal Bishop Charged with Heresy for Ordaining a Gay Man Who Was in a Committed Relationship*, by the Rt. Rev. Walter C. Righter, author of the longest subtitle in publishing history, all I could hope for was an asteroid.

There's no real way to review it so I'll just tell you what, to the best of my knowledge, are the bare bones of the story and then I'll tell you why I had so much trouble pulling them together.

Righter's troubles with the traditional wing of the Episcopal Church began in 1972 when, as Bishop of Iowa, he broke a tie at the Diocesan Convention with a vote favoring the ordination of women. Soon after, he was asked to issue a statement on homosexuality. At this time the American Psychiatric Association held that homosexuality was treatable, and so he recommended that the church stick to redemption and leave therapy to the shrinks. When his stance drew praise from a conservative churchman, he says, "I recognized my error at once."

A Pilgrim's Way: The Personal Story of the Episcopal Bishop Charged with Heresy for Ordaining a Gay Man Who Was in a Committed Relationship, by Walter C. Righter (Knopf, 192 pp., $22)

Thereafter he became a champion of gay rights, aligning himself with the liberal wing as the church moved inexorably toward the question of gay ordination. The problem was that there were no unequivocal rules to go by. The canon on ordination contained a "con-

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

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science clause" allowing bishops to refuse to ordain women if they could not bring themselves to do it, so the question of gay ordination was a collision waiting to happen.

After Bishop Paul Moore of New York ordained an out but unpartnered lesbian in 1977, conservatives, sensing the drift, pushed through a resolution stating that gay ordinations were "not appropriate" if the candidate was living with someone, and "recommended" that they not be done. This mealymouthed wording was all it took to activate the Emma Goldman streak in certain Anglican divines, namely Newark's Bishop John Spong, who ordained Robert Williams in 1989.

Williams, who stated publicly that Mother Teresa's life would be enhanced "if she got laid," was soon forced to resign. The House of Bishops voted to dissociate themselves from Spong's action, but Bishop Righter, by then retired and filling in as Spong's assistant bishop in the Newark Diocese, followed Spong's lead and ordained Barry Stopfel, who lived with his "life partner," as a deacon. The next year Bishop Spong ordained Stopfel as a priest. He was assisted by a proud Bishop Righter, who wore a rhinestone-studded red stole belonging to his new gay protégé, afterward laughing when someone asked him if he always consecrated in drag.

In 1994 Righter signed Spong's statement that homosexuality was "morally neutral." The following year he was accused of heresy by a small right-wing conspiracy—ten bishops, seven of them "from the South and Southwest" and four violently opposed to ordaining women. "There it was, the clear link between misogyny and homophobia," Righter mourns. His accusers, "not understanding the tides of history and focusing only on their fears, were attempting to stop the efforts of the church at inclusivity."

Bishop Righter laughed when asked if he always consecrated in drag.

On a more hardball level they were trying, he thinks, to get at Bishop Spong through him. Spong was their real target but they were afraid to go after him first because of his media savvy and withering wit. To "get Spong but deny him the spotlight" they used Righter as a stalking horse.

Righter beat the heresy rap and made a triumphant appearance at last year's church convention with his wife, both of them sporting crosses beside the pink triangles on their name tags, and Mrs. Righter proudly driving around with her HRETIC vanity plates. The gay Barry Stopfel is now rector of St. George's in Maplewood, New Jersey, which has grown 30 per cent since he took over, thanks not only to gay and lesbian communicants but also to "young couples with small children who want an inclusive experience for themselves and their children."

Nobody got burned at the stake but you'll get burned if you shell out 22 bucks for this book. First, there's the literary style:

> I left him and walked outside, bumping into the Presiding Bishop as I went out the door. He stopped and said, "Are you all right?" I guess I must have come out of the door rather abruptly, with an angry look on my face. I nodded and said, "Yes, I came outside because I wasn't going to listen to any more of that bulls—." Sensing my anger and frustration, Ed said, "I'm glad you walked away." I deeply appreciated his compassionate response.

Second, there's that dreadful liberal earnestness. People who lack a sense of humor always tell a funny story by announcing how funny it is. Of Righter's wife, Nancy, we learn: "She took great delight in embarrassing friends by giving them condoms from GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis, a dynamic leader in AIDS-related work). We all laugh about the story, and it became a part of our family history."

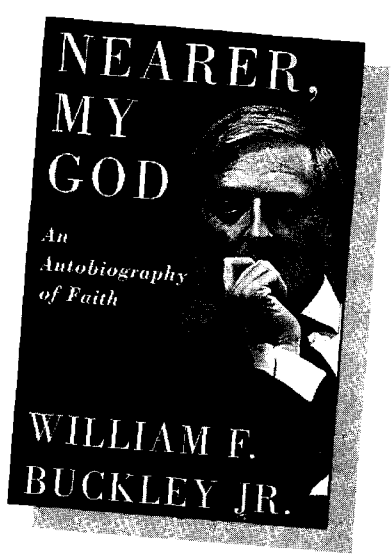
Third, there's his teasing. Told as a boy about his aunt's gay husband, he says: "There was nothing judgmental in what I was told . . . later on in life I was to discover more about that story." What was he told? What did he discover? While awaiting trial he received a check from Bishop Desmond Tutu, who "stated clearly his convictions about homosexuality." What were they? Waiting to go on *Nightline,* he was so grateful for Ted Koppel's kindness that he vowed to remember him in a prayer from the new 1979 prayer book, "For Those Who Influence Public Opinion." I would dearly love to hear this invocation, wouldn't you? But he doesn't quote it.

Not only does he fail to finish what he starts, sometimes he doesn't even start it. What was life like in the Newark Diocese with the withering Bishop Spong? "For a variety of reasons, too complex to describe here, the cathedral people were out of synch with their bishop." IF NOT HERE, WHERE?!

Finally, there's the vortex that comes from not knowing how to put a book together. Reading this clotty, repetitive, subject-hopping mess is like trying to clear a jungle with a Dustbuster. Righter handles chronology like someone playing with the rewind and fast-forward buttons of a tape recorder. In the first chapter he tells us he got divorced without mentioning having got married, then waits eight chapters to reveal that he's been married not twice but three times, holding forth meanwhile on the Episcopal practice of forcing divorced priests to resign without making it clear that the canon was changed before he shed his wives.

The real definition of heresy can be found in his Acknowledgments when he thanks eight people at Knopf "who gave form and order to my work." This book was a trial by publishing and everyone involved sank like a stone. □

A Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Chosen as one of the Best Books of 1997 by *Publishers Weekly*.



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A Photograph of Jesus?

JEFFREY HART

EVER since the 1988 radiocarbon dating, which placed the famous Shroud of Turin as having originated somewhere between 1260 and 1390, the matter has disappeared from our cultural radar screen. The Shroud is generally thought to be a remarkable medieval artifact.

But not so fast. Ian Wilson, author of a previous book on the Shroud, has produced here a magnificent state-of-the-question study, remarkable both for its scholarship and for its philosophical poise.

The Blood and the Shroud: New Evidence That the World's Most Sacred Relic Is Real, by Ian Wilson (Free Press, 333 pp., $25)

Mr. Wilson is scrupulously fair, although he does hope passionately that the Shroud is genuine. Nevertheless, he explores all the evidence and does full justice to his opponents. He writes, as well, an engaging narrative, indeed a fine detective story, which gives the reader the impression of thinking along with him as he explores the material.

Of course it seems absurd to think that this old piece of linen might actually bear an image of the dead Jesus in His tomb. And what about that 1988 dating, conducted by three reputable laboratories?

In 1988 I doubted their conclusion, because of the weight of contradicting evidence. Mr. Wilson provides a wealth of detail that I cannot go into here, but the problems with the 1260–1390 radiocarbon dating can be summarized as follows:

1. Documents follow the Shroud very far back in time. Mr. Wilson is able to pursue this track toward, and maybe into, the first century.

2. In 1898, Secondo Pia discovered that the Shroud had never been properly seen. He photographed it, and found that many features of the image that had been puzzling were immediately recognizable on black-and-white negatives. The odds against someone in 1260–1390 somehow "painting" an image which would not disclose itself until the invention of photography are astronomical. Also, the image has three-dimensionality: a computer model has been made that amounts to a bust of the man depicted here.

3. Experts on anatomy, examining Secondo Pia's negatives and other evidence, have found that the image has details that no medieval artist is at all likely to have guessed. For example, no thumbs are visible on the folded hands. Experiments with cadavers have shown that if a body is suspended by nails driven through the palms, the flesh simply tears. However, nails driven through the aperture in the wrists will hold the body—but cause the thumbs to bend inward.

4. The image was not painted. It seems to have involved a chemical change in the linen threads, somewhat resembling a faint scorch by a hot iron. No one has been able to explain this process.

5. In 1972, Dr. Max Frei, an expert on pollen, took a dozen stick-tape samples from the linen. Pollen, as it happens, is virtually immortal. Frei's samples indicated an itinerary for the cloth that goes from the Dead Sea area, through Turkey, to France. Some of the pollen came from vegetation that no longer grows around the Dead Sea, but which does appear in early sediment dated to the first century.

The Shroud of Turin is generally thought to be a remarkable medieval artifact. But not so fast.

6. Then there is the fact that we do not have other shrouds of people similarly executed. For this there are two probable reasons. First, a body decomposing over time would ruin such a piece of cloth. If this shroud is authentic, the body did not long remain in contact with it. And, second, crucifixion was a method of execution reserved for particularly heinous or despised criminals.

Mr. Hart is an NR *senior editor.*

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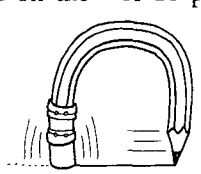
People were not likely to cherish the shrouds of such criminals—but Jesus' followers would have venerated this one.

All of the above was known in 1988 at the time of the radiocarbon dating. It was surely more reasonable to think the dating in error than to consider all the other evidence nugatory. Yet I believe that I was in the minority in suspecting the dating. But now Mr. Wilson gives us plenty of evidence to support my conclusion.

In various ways the linen cloth is corrupt. It has been much handled over the centuries, it has been in proximity to fires, and it has been sewn onto and wrapped in other pieces of cloth. Furthermore, if you section one of its threads with a microtome and examine the section microscopically, you see that each thread exists in what amounts to a tube of transparent bacterial matter. This bacterial build-up is still going on, and the transparent residue accounts for the "shiny" or "new" appearance of this ancient cloth.

The effect of such bacterial action has been investigated as regards Egyptian mummies. It can turn out that a radiocarbon test of a mummified body's wrapping places the mummy much later than we know it to be.

Where does all this leave the Shroud question today? Mr. Wilson reasonably concludes that another radiocarbon attempt would probably give the same dates as in 1988. The Shroud incorporates its history, and we are not going to get a clean shot at dating it on the basis of radiocarbon. Mr. Wilson is very careful not to claim certitude.



I think I might go a bit further than he does. In assessing the probabilities, I find it much easier to consider the Shroud authentic than to hypothesize that it was—somehow—created in 1260–1390.

But if the Shroud is indeed authentic, then what produced that straw-colored image?

According to the Gospel narratives, something unusual—indeed, unprecedented—happened to that corpse in the tomb. We are told that later, when Jesus reappeared, the disciples did not recognize Him at first; on the morning of the Resurrection Mary Magdalene does not recognize Him until He speaks her name. In John 20:19 Jesus seems to be able to move through a closed door. Apparently some strange reconstitution or transformation occurred. If this is so, my guess is that this mysterious process created the scorching heat which produced the image on the cloth.

Of course you are wondering whether it might be possible to clone Jesus, using the blood from the cloth. Mr. Wilson says no, there isn't enough DNA in these samples. And even if we could clone Him, we would presumably get the mortal first-century man, without His divine dimension.

Be that as it may, Mr. Wilson has given us a most valuable book about history, about weighing the possibilities, and about the state of the Shroud question. □

The Last Gentlemen

JAMES BOWMAN

A Thread of Years, by John Lukacs (Yale, 481 pp., $30)

IN the years before the "theory" craze overwhelmed university English departments, there was a period when the dominant mode of instruction was by what at my university was called "practical criticism." This consisted in taking a short poem or a passage from a longer work of poetry or prose and showing how each detail of style—imagery, diction, rhythm, or rhyme—contributed to the work's overall meaning and effect. Implicit in this exercise was the assumption that words in a work of literary art were like strands of DNA in a living organism, and that the whole was somehow present in each of its parts. John Lukacs, our most literary historian by far and the author or editor of 18 previous volumes, mainly on the twentieth century, understands that history too is made of words, and in *A Thread of Years* he has undertaken to give us a sort of historical version of practical criticism.

Beginning with 1901 and proceeding through the century a year at a time until he arrives at 1969, he sketches a two- or three-page, usually fictional, vignette, meant to be in some way representative of the year, and then offers a two- or three-page dissection of it in the form of a dialogue between himself and an imaginary interlocutor, pointing out the vignette's various significances. The only common element linking the chapters is the character of Kensington, or K., "a Philadelphian gentleman" born with the century, episodes from whose remarkably uneventful life account for about one in four of the vignettes. K. is a cultivated man and a minor painter who was present at none of the great scenes of our century's drama. Yet Lukacs makes him embody the century as much as Hitler, Stalin, or Roosevelt.

Anyone with an interest in our century—which means an interest in how at each branch in the road that led to today we took one turning rather than another—will find this book completely addictive. As Lukacs himself says, the Socratic injunction "Know thyself" is also a way of saying, "Know your own history and the history of your times, which are not the same things, but they are inseparable." He is always a rewarding guide and companion on the journey, although his dour and wintry analyses, *nuancé* (as he himself puts it) with ethnic, religious, political, and class distinctions that a less finely tuned sensibility would not have picked up, may grow wearisome if consumed all in one sitting. This is a book for dipping into over time—and for arguing with. Lukacs is right about so much that every disagreement must be carefully weighed, and in matters of taste—not usually thought of these days as a requirement for a historian—he almost never puts a foot wrong.

At times his analysis suffers from the fact that he knows so much. There is something glib and unsatisfactory, for example, in his saying that the 1960s were *merely* a re-run of the 1920s. And he himself finds in his chapter on 1966 a genuinely new phenomenon, which is the academic who "is convinced that his job is to represent ideas . . . rather than explain them or even believe in them." Like his modest hero, K., Lukacs is perhaps worn out by the time he hits the Sixties, and anxious to be done with things. More seriously, his careful adumbrations of the ethnic and religious

Mr. Bowman is the American Editor of the Times Literary Supplement.

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identities of his characters sometimes seem to get in the way of our understanding, instead of enhancing it. His own self-description as "a reactionary impressionist" is accurate, yet like all his most interesting characters and the century itself he suffers from "split-mindedness" to an extent he is not always ready to acknowledge. Part European (specifically, Hungarian), part American, part liberal, part conservative, he nevertheless manages to synthesize large historical judgments with a sense of enormous and rather repellent self-confidence.

John Lukacs's great theme is the decline of the 'Anglo-American-Celtic' world dominance and its cognate expression, the gentleman.

His great theme is the decline, from its zenith at the turn of the century, of the "Anglo-American-Celtic" world dominance and of its cognate social expression, the ideal of the gentleman. As we might expect, Lukacs has the outsider's passionate admiration of the latter, combined with a very Hungarian pessimism about its progressive enfeeblement and the tide of vulgarity by which it has been swamped in the latter part of the century. At the same time, it is not too fanciful to suggest that there is a trace of Central European *Schadenfreude* in Lukacs's witty (though nearly humorless) and erudite account of the eclipse of the Atlanticist hegemony. Anglo-American withers will remain unwrung, since so much of this account depends on a positively Habsburgian belief in the importance of blood—thinning blood in the case of what he hates to call but cannot avoid calling the WASP ruling classes.

I suspect that what Lukacs hates about the expression is its Anglo-Saxon flippancy and self-mockery. To him the racial and ethnic and religious make-up of the dominant class, whether in Philadelphia or in the world, is a matter of immense and abiding importance and therefore, of course, hugely serious. The fact that German, Italian, Asiatic, and even Hungarian people can and do make a painless transition to effective Anglo-Saxondom inside two generations is one that he simply cannot bear to contemplate. To him it must seem like an annihilation of the very taste and texture of history, an Americanized, fast-food version of the historical cuisine he has spent a lifetime learning how to prepare.

Yet perhaps the choices are not quite so stark as they seem. Perhaps full-bodied history and even gentlemanliness are not to be quite extinguished by the vulgar ideological reductionism of late-century intellectual life. Perhaps the pessimistic Hungarian is wrong in thinking, when it comes to "the erosion of beliefs and of institutions and of manners and morals," that "the pendulum never swings back." Perhaps it is not mere intellectual dishonesty ("the dominant affliction of this century") which makes us believe that a more American optimism about the regenerative powers of the social order is possible. But certainly there is much to interest and entertain us in Lukacs's historical tour de force, and much wisdom about the human nature which transcends history as well. □

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Latino America

GEORGE J. BORJAS

THE growth of the United States' Hispanic population in the past three decades is likely to stand as one of the most dramatic demographic shifts in this country's history. The Bureau of the Census did not even have an official designation for a person of "Hispanic" origin as recently as 1960.

Things have changed, and they changed quickly. The resurgence of legal immigration began soon after a new immigration law was enacted in 1965. Meanwhile, the end of the *bracero* (guest-worker) program in 1964 generated a large flow of illegal aliens from Mexico. In their wisdom, the federal bureaucrats in charge of compiling statistical data proclaimed: "Let there be Hispanics!" and a new minority group was born. Today this group makes up 11 per cent of the U.S. population; and because of high immigration levels and high birth rates, it will reach 20 per cent by 2050 (at that time blacks will account for 12 per cent of the population). In a very short time, the United States has been transformed in ways that only forty years ago would have seemed unimaginable.

Strangers among Us: How Latino Immigration Is Transforming America, by Roberto Suro (Knopf, 341 pp., $26.95)

Roberto Suro, a respected journalist at the *Washington Post*, provides an engaging discussion of the social and economic implications of the emergence of the Hispanic minority. And, although I am not sure this is what he intended, his account is quite depressing and rings a loud warning bell.

Suro starts out on a dark note with the story of Imelda, the child of Mexican immigrants who entered the United States illegally. Imelda herself was smuggled across the border when she was a toddler. We first see her on the eve of the traditional coming-out party that celebrates a Mexican girl's 15th birthday and signals to the world that she has now become a young lady. The morning after this happy occasion Imelda has news for her parents: she is pregnant and plans to move in with her boyfriend. When Suro last saw her, Imelda had become a "dimestore Madonna."

The mood does not get much brighter as the story goes along. In anecdote after anecdote, Suro paints a worrisome picture of the Hispanic population. This picture includes teenage pregnancies, gangs, drug dealing, substance abuse, and so on. Almost every anecdote he tells bodes ill for the future of American Hispanics. At the very beginning of the book Suro summarizes the hard lesson Imelda's parents learned at that breakfast table: "Latino immigration delivers short-term gains and has long-term costs."

An exception to this depressing account of downward mobility is Suro's description of the Cuban enclave in Miami. This community contains many upwardly mobile Hispanics, but Suro does not seem to like them very much. (Full disclosure: the author of this review was born in Cuba and as a young boy lived for two years in Miami's Cuban enclave during the early 1960s.) Suro describes a visit to Belen, an elite Catholic school. Belen was originally located in Havana, and was one of the schools that educated Cuba's elite. Castro, in fact, was a Belen alumnus. After the revolution closed down these elite schools in 1961, the Jesuits simply reopened Belen in Miami, where it now caters to the American-born children of the Cuban community.

The young boys in Belen want to go far. But Suro views their ambition with a jaundiced eye. These boys will get ahead because their parents, who are now successful bankers, doctors, and lawyers, will help them get ahead. In Suro's view, the Cuban community is selfish, intolerant, and insular, refusing to help anyone who is not a part of the enclave—particularly Miami's blacks. Cuban culture has a "racist predilection." And why do Cubans succeed in the United States? Because they received a lot of government assistance when they arrived here, and because "thousands of Cuban exiles were either fully employed or received extra income from the Central Intelligence Agency."

Cubans are not the only ones whom Suro views antagonistically. Many of those who criticize current immigration policy come in for a beating, even the much-revered Barbara Jordan. Before her untimely death, Miss Jordan chaired the Commission on Immigration Reform, which recommended a substantial cut in the number of legal immigrants admitted into the country. In Suro's view, she "pawned her gravelly voice" to give respectability to anti-immigration sentiments. Apparently that gravelly voice was good enough for President Clinton, who "took all of 15 minutes" to be convinced that Miss Jordan's recommendations were sound (although Clinton characteristically disowned that support after her death).

Despite these obvious political biases, there is much to learn from Suro's reporting. In a fascinating account of how ethnic networks arise, Suro describes how the migration of one single person from the Totonicapán area of Guatemala in 1978 led to the flow of a large number of Guatemalans into Houston. Suro also recognizes that it is in our interests to stop illegal immigration, and gives a detailed account of the success of the "Hold the Line" operation in El Paso, which reduced the number of illegal entries substantially and was strongly supported even by El Paso's Hispanic community.

Suro's proposed solutions for slowing the illegal flow, however, are not credible. He suggests, for example, that the United States should penalize the illegal aliens caught trying to cross the border, perhaps by putting them in detention for a day or two. But who will pay the detention costs? We all know that it is cheaper to send a child to Harvard than to send a felon to the penitentiary.

In general, Suro is not too keen on cost–benefit analyses. "There are many different ways a society can weigh the advantages and disadvantages of immigration, but putting a price tag on people—regardless of who they are or where they came from—is demagoguery." But Suro neglects to detail the "many different ways" he says we can assess whether

Mr. Borjas, the Pforzheimer Professor of Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, is the author of Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigration on the U.S. Economy.

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immigration is a boon or a bane for the country.

There are also some philosophical issues that are not pursued. For instance, the term Hispanic is at once both uniquely American and profoundly un-American. It is American because it reflects our national passion for categorizing and classifying—even if the classification makes no sense to anyone outside our borders. (Who but Americans would have the chutzpah to gloss over the differences between Venezuelans, Cubans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans—or, even more strikingly, to create "Asi-

In a very short time, the U.S. has been transformed by Hispanic immigration in ways that only forty years ago would have seemed unimaginable.

ans" by combining Filipinos, Indians, Japanese, and Chinese?) It is also profoundly un-American. If all men are created equal, why do we need yet another classification of race and ethnicity to further divide us?

Suro begins his book by stating the general theme that "Latino immigration delivers short-term gains and has long-term costs." These gains and costs, in Suro's understanding, are the ones borne by the Hispanic immigrants themselves. If Imelda's parents had not migrated to the United States, they would not have benefited from short-term financial comforts, but they would have avoided the long-term cost of having a "dimestore Madonna" in the household.

But this is only part of the picture. Hispanic immigration generates short-term gains for the United States—there are benefits from an influx of less-skilled workers who can till our fields, work in our factories, and perform service jobs in our homes, restaurants, and hotels. But for our nation there are also long-term costs. We are just beginning to realize the major social and economic role that a new underclass of poor Hispanics may play in the life of the United States throughout the next century. □

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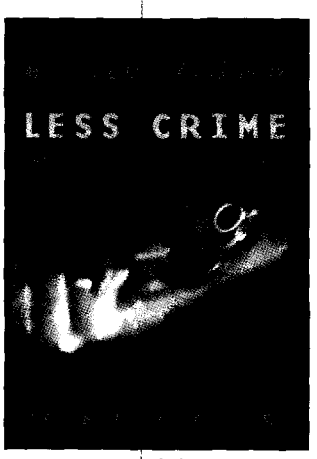

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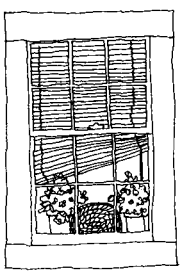
Right on the Money

TERRY TEACHOUT

A HALF-CENTURY ago, the art critic of *Partisan Review*, the house organ of the New York intellectuals, declared that the School of Paris had run its course, and that the greatest art in the world at that time was being produced by a group of

Clement Greenberg: A Life, by Florence Rubenfeld (Scribner, 336 pp., $30)

obscure abstract painters in Greenwich Village whose work struck most critics as ugly and nonsensical. It was a breathtakingly audacious claim, one that could easily have wrecked the career of the man who made it. If Clement Greenberg had been wrong about Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, and the other artists of the New York School whom he championed all but singlehandedly throughout the Forties, his seemingly bizarre pronouncements would simply have been dismissed as the work of a crank; instead, they threw the art world into a protracted convulsion, at the end of which the merits of abstract expressionism were acknowledged by critics, collectors, and connoisseurs everywhere.



As Florence Rubenfeld writes in her new biography of Greenberg: "He possessed an almost Baudelairean sense of his age, was so much in tune with the painting and sculpture of his time that, for a brief moment, it was as if the path along which American art would unfold had been revealed to him in advance."

For his pains, Greenberg became the most despised art critic in America, though there were plenty of other reasons to hate him: he was, Miss Rubenfeld claims, a vicious bully and a philandering husband who spent much of the last quarter-century of his life in a drugged and drunken stupor, surrounded by a dwindling band of sycophants who hung on his every sneer. No doubt she will be accused of exaggeration and distortion by at least some of those who knew Greenberg personally, but her book was written with his cooperation, and while *Clement Greenberg: A Life* is presumably no more than a partial portrait of a bristlingly difficult man, one suspects that it is largely accurate as far as it goes.

Miss Rubenfeld acknowledges at the outset that this is a "social biography," not an intellectual one, but she has nevertheless gone to considerable trouble to summarize the outlines of Greenberg's thought and describe the complex cultural milieu from which he emerged. The results are often superficial, but also well-meaning—the anti-Communism of the *Partisan Review* circle, for instance, is described without condescension or repugnance—and readers unfamiliar with Greenberg's writings will come away from *Clement Greenberg: A Life* with a clear understanding of what he stood for, both as an art critic and as a cultural politician.

Though he would become one of the foremost anti-Stalinist intellectuals of the postwar era, Greenberg started out as a full-fledged Marxist, in the process acquiring a belief in the inevitability of history that played a central role in shaping his theory of modernism. Modern artists, he argued, were driven to abstraction by the lash of history, having found representation inadequate as a means of expressing their alienation from capitalist society:

> The imperative comes from history, from the age in conjunction with a particular moment reached in a particular tradition of art. This conjunction holds the artist in a vise from which at the present moment he can escape only by surrendering his ambition and returning to a stale past. . . . The alternative to Picasso is not Michelangelo, but kitsch.

But Greenberg never allowed his ideology to prevent him from seeing clearly the paintings and sculpture about which he wrote, and though he believed devoutly that "the very best painting, the major painting, of our age is almost exclusively abstract," he was no less capable of responding sensitively to the work of such gifted representationalists as John Marin, Milton Avery, and Edward Hopper:

> A special category of art should be devised for the kind of thing Hopper does. He is not a painter in the full sense; his means are second-hand, shabby, and impersonal. But his rudimentary sense of composition is sufficient for a message that conveys an insight into the present nature of American life for which there is no parallel in our literature, though that insight itself is literary. . . . if he were a better painter, he would, most likely, not be so superior an artist.

Why, then, is Greenberg reviled by the vast majority of art critics and scholars? In 1961, he published *Art and Culture*, a collection of essays, most of them heavily revised, in which his nuanced critical positions were reduced to a parade of blunt obiter dicta. Not until the publication in 1986 of the first two volumes of his collected writings did it become possible for younger readers to acquaint themselves with Greenberg's groundbreaking reviews of the Forties; those readers had known him solely from *Art and Culture*, in which too much is asserted and not enough explained, and thus were unaware of how receptive and wide-ranging he had been in his earlier days as a working critic.

Even now, it is impossible to read Clement Greenberg without being stirred by the compelling force of his aesthetic convictions.

Around the time that *Art and Culture* came out, Greenberg became closely identified with a group of painters known as the "color-field abstractionists," whose work he believed to be the culmination of modernism. He praised the work of Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski in disconcertingly lavish terms, curtly dismissing all competing artists as minor. Because of his track record as a trend-spotter, his new passion was taken seriously by collectors and curators: where Greenberg went, money followed.

This time, though, the prophet of

Mr. Teachout, Commentary*'s music critic, is writing a biography of H. L. Mencken.*

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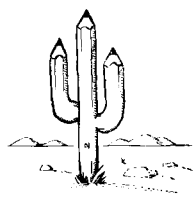
abstract expressionism had bet on the wrong horse, for the high seriousness of late modernism was already in the process of being supplanted by the playful nihilism of the postmodern era, whose reigning god was not Pablo Picasso but Marcel Duchamp. "The practiced eye," Greenberg wrote in 1961, "tends always toward the definitely and positively good in art, knows it is there, and will remain dissatisfied with anything else." Such sentiments came increasingly to be viewed as elitist and reactionary, as did abstraction itself; by the Eighties, art was once again regarded as an instrument of radical social change, and Greenberg, who had seen it all before in the Thirties, simply stopped writing, perhaps out of disgust. He published nothing of significance in the two decades prior to his death in 1994, though his earlier work continued to be cited contemptuously by academics who never forgave him for turning his back on Marx.



Greenberg's critics were right about one thing—his history-driven theory of modernism was too neat by half—just as he himself was mistaken about a great many things, not least the long-term importance of the color-field painters, whose work he loved. But every critic makes mistakes, and Greenberg will be remembered in the long run not for overrating Morris Louis, but for having produced a body of writing about art that is fully worthy of comparison with the best work of the best critics of the twentieth century. Even now, it is impossible to read him without being stirred by the compelling force of his aesthetic convictions. That is why Clement Greenberg continues to make people angry to this day: critics are hated not for being wrong, but for being right. □

Foreign Correspondent

HERB GREER

I FIRST met Kenneth Tynan at the end of a British anti-nuclear demonstration in 1958, outside the village of Aldermaston. He was a tall, sallow, courteous man with the hair and features of a frail palomino horse. As a very young journalist I was somewhat agog in what I supposed was heavy intellectual company, dying to see how Tynan, the novelist Doris Lessing, and the poet Christopher Logue would discuss the big issue of nuclear weapons. In fact, the burning question on their minds during a long ride into London was what sort of peace-symbol badges demonstrators ought to wear.

Letters, by Kenneth Tynan (Random House, 688 pp., $30)

It seems a long time ago, that palmy London age when revolution (except in Cuba) was slipping temporarily out of politics and into the crotch. *Epatant* at almost any cost, delighting his fans, Kenneth Tynan rode the crest of that wave. He was famous (or notorious) as the first person to utter the word "f—" on British television. But for all his apparent frivolity and flash—and his asinine radical-chic politics—his influence in British theater was real and significant.

A Sunday-morning ritual in Hampstead was reading the Kenneth Tynan theater reviews and arts essays in the London *Observer*. Unlike other critics, then and now, who wrote like aging dons from a second-rate provincial university, he was an exuberant and brilliant show-off in print. His prose romped, curveted, and made jokes in bad taste, like the allusion to Orson Welles's Othello as "Citizen Coon." But he always retained a magical ability to make theater seem *important*. Tynan campaigned successfully against British censorship of the stage and was one of the prime movers in setting up what is now the Royal National Theatre.

No one else in Britain has equaled his force and his eloquence as a paradoxically very public *éminence grise* of the theatrical world. Through his work at the National he helped to expand the range of a British theatrical repertoire which had become stuffy and class-bound; he also fostered a new vitality (and, unfortunately, a permanent left-wing ideological warp) among the younger generation of playwrights. Later he moved to America to write for *The New Yorker*, *Playboy*, and *Esquire*, among others; this final, less activist phase of his career was devoted mostly to stylish and entertaining journalism.

Tynan suffered from an enzyme deficiency which gradually destroyed his lungs. His death came early (in 1980, at age 53) after a long drawn-out decline, a process which he faced bravely but worsened by heavy smoking. His widow, Kathleen Tynan, published a rather nasty biography of him in 1987. Through five hundred pages of relentlessly suburban prose, she paid token tribute to his serious work; the rest was a brutal attack on his first wife and a merciless exposure of his marriage with the author herself; in particular it lingered on the grottier aspects of Tynan's sex life: his need to masturbate before writing, his sad, perverse addiction to spanking and pornographic photographs, and his infidelities.

Perhaps as a sort of atonement, Kathleen Tynan later assembled a collection of her late husband's letters. She died herself in 1995, shortly after the collection appeared in Britain. Very slightly abridged, it has now been published by Random House. The portrait it sketches is altogether more attractive.

Kenneth Tynan had a magical ability to make theater seem important.

Some features, it has to be said, are similar. During school years and at Oxford, the intellectual butterfly drops names of authors he has not read and plunges into a flurry of activities—drama, editing, skirt-chasing, drinking, writing—in which study took second or third place. The young Tynan develops an acute theatrical instinct, with an ability to charm men into lasting friendship and women into bed.

The obsession with sex is unmistakable, but less perverted and disgusting than in the biography. It blooms in the correspondence over *Oh! Calcutta!* and its failed sequel, *Carte Blanche*, which seem (on this evidence) to have been for him a curious exercise in vicarious exhibitionism, alloyed with a childish lust to scandalize. Where his sharp but oddly

Mr. Greer is an American author and playwright living in the United Kingdom.

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narrow intelligence is on display—in the letters on practical matters of direction and interpretation in rehearsal—it is impressive and flexible. One cannot help feeling that Tynan—who dropped a career as a director when a senior actress clashed with him and had him fired—missed his true vocation.

Except for occasional glimmerings, there is none of the arrogance or the cruelty to friends and women which loom so large in his widow's biography. Tynan's awful political sciolism sparks out now and again, but not offensively. Many of the letters—to his wives, his colleagues, friends like Marlene Dietrich, Louise Brooks, Welles, Laurence Olivier, and many such others—vibrate with an enthusiasm and charm which must have been irresistible in the flesh, and made Tynan a pleasure to know—on good days.

The best effect of this collection is to pull this Fifties and Sixties icon off his plastic pedestal, revealing the man himself as a bit less flippant, much warmer, and more generous than the shallow mandarin image he liked to project. □

ART

Up Close and Impersonal

JAMES GARDNER

BEING an art critic is not especially difficult. Having spent a number of seasons on the New York art scene and having read a certain number of books on the subject, I now find that I can often come to an informed assessment of an artist with almost shocking celerity. In most cases, between three and thirty seconds will do nicely for a gallery exhibition. Every so often, however, I feel guilty about this and am afraid that I may be shortchanging some deserving painter or sculptor, and so I look more closely. But I have found that, even if some years have passed between viewings, my initial assessment tends to stand.

In the case of Chuck Close, now the subject of a mid-career retrospective at the Modern, I am having a harder time of it. I was familiar with his work before, and I disliked it. Then I saw the Modern's exhibition, and I felt that there was more here than I had at first conceived. And then I saw it a second time, and I felt that my assessment had to be revised downward again.

My tentativeness about Close's art is odd since it is very much the essence of his paintings that they should disclose themselves with almost breathless speed and obviousness. Their effect is equivalent to a sudden clarion blast—followed by total silence. Each work is a massive image of a face in which, especially in the earlier ones, the suppression of all subtlety and all nuance is the predominant point. Though Close renders his sitters' features down to the merest nick, pore, follicle, and stub, he scrupulously avoids referring to his images as portraits. Rather he calls them "heads." They are based on photographs, usually taken by Close, which are then engrafted faithfully onto the canvas in the manner of the Photorealists of the Seventies, a group with whom, nevertheless, he prefers not to be identified.

Chuck Close renders his sitters' features down to the merest nick, pore, follicle, and stub.

Many of the sitters reappear over the years. It is interesting that when these images were made, starting around 1970, the subjects, among them Nancy Graves, Richard Serra, and Philip Glass, were entirely unknown beyond a small bohemian circle. This was an essential part of the artist's strategy: why are we looking at this enormous image of a nobody, an image fully as large as the sculpted head of Constantine the Great at the Capitol in Rome? This incongruity, with its overtones of both democratization and coercive propaganda, seemed compelling once upon a time. Now, twenty or thirty years later, almost every one of the sitters has become a famous, even a revered, cultural icon.

Traditionally, what moves us in a portrait is the way it captures the universal humanity of a specific man or woman, even as it reduces that humanity to a group of specific details. In the case of Close, however, the universal has been totally expunged, leaving only the million details that make up the face in question. We are confronted with the paradox of the taxidermist: he can give you the specific being, down to the minutest hair. But the vitality that was the point upon which all these specifics once converged is necessarily absent.

Close's more recent heads, especially those made after he was stricken with quadriplegia, reveal a far more painterly application of pigment and a far more expressionistic use of color. Most of these works consist of thousands of abstract biomorphic shapes deployed along a strict gridwork that add up to a recognizable face only when viewed at a considerable distance. One of the more imposing examples of this is an image of the artist Lucas Samaras, the features of whose magus-like face dematerialize amid the concentric irradiations from a matrix at his forehead. I understand what the critics and public have admired in this and similar works. There is a painterliness here that represents a radical and refreshing shift from the glacial precision that Close preferred earlier in his career. But one can't help feeling that the charity of the critics has confused a worthy ambition with an eminent achievement. For all their vigorously impasted splodges, how much life is there really in these insistent facets of paint? Draw close to the canvas and they seem irrepressibly vibrant; draw closer still and they are suddenly spent, depleted, and dead.

In the abstractness of these later heads, as in the manic realness of the earlier ones, Close has merely rung one more change on the now hoary theme of modernist alienation. The creepy deadness of the earlier images, with their baffled eyes and their pasty complexions, is supposed to repel us as effectively as a wax figure or a rouged face in a coffin. The decomposed, mechanomorphic variations of the later works are equally, if differently, off-

Mr. Gardner is NR*'s art critic.*

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putting. The problem here is that this alienation, once it has been (very readily) understood, has nothing more to disclose to the viewer in the successive repetition of each subsequent portrait. Furthermore, criticism must register that it is a far more difficult, complicated, and, yes, even noble enterprise to capture effectively the shifting and manifold humanness of a man than to reduce him to monstrous banality. This is not to deny that these works achieve the alienating effects they seek. Rather it is to insist that, at this late date, those effects are achieved too easily and have too little left to teach us. □

FILM

Angelic Butchery

JOHN SIMON

SOMETIMES a film is so stupid as to be downright irresistible. When this happens, it is usually because the film has addressed a Big Topic with utmost banality, according to some tried and totally trite formula. Discerning people who have recently worked in Hollywood tell me I can't imagine the jejune benightedness of the current tycoons of Tinseltown. True: I can't imagine it. But watching their movies, I can see it.

Such a one is ***City of Angels***, which easily equals—perhaps even surpasses—the preposterousness of previous films dealing with angels falling for mortals. The idea is old; it goes back at least to Alphonse de Lamartine's murky *La Chute d'un ange* (*The Fall of an Angel*, 1838), in which the angel Cédar falls in love with the maiden Daidha and defies God's wrath by assuming human form to win her. No good comes of it, and, after all sorts of dismal adventures, including their children's dying of thirst in the desert, Daidha dies. Cédar makes a funeral pyre for her and the children's bodies, then leaps into the flames himself. The spirit who scatters their ashes prophesies that the fallen angel will have to expiate his sin through nine incarnations.

One of these incarnations—let's hope the last—must be Nicolas Cage, who plays the angel Seth enamored of Meg Ryan's Dr. Maggie Rice, described in the press kit as "a pragmatic heart surgeon . . . deeply shaken by losing a patient on her table for no apparent reason." The nonapparent reason (which applies equally to the existence of this movie) is the need of the screenwriter, Dana Stevens, to get her scenario going. For standing by—invisibly to humans—is Seth, the angel charged with helping the dead patient into the Beyond. He is enacted by the unsightly and untalented Nick Cage, of whom I once wrote that Cage ought to be not his name, but his address.

Cage's improbable career is, in its way, exemplary. Being the nephew of Francis Ford Coppola can help even someone seemingly more related to Francis the talking mule, and it is Coppola who gave him his first film role in *Rumble Fish*. His specialty is playing jerks (as in *Raising Arizona*), falling-down drunks (as in *Leaving Las Vegas*), or various kinds of criminals. He excels at that dead-sheep look that some mistake for soulfulness, and that he uses a lot in *City of Angels* as he woos Meg Ryan. He also often speaks in an emotion-strangulated whisper that sounds like acute laryngitis. Altogether—with his pointy ears, lymphatic regard, and equine countenance—he suggests, in the throes of passion, a drayhorse on the way to the glue factory.

Nick Cage excels at that dead-sheep look that some mistake for soulfulness.

As the no-nonsense surgeon he falls for both physically and metaphysically, Meg Ryan is charming as ever, though rather unlike any cardiothoracist I have yet encountered. She understandably works up more feeling for Seth before

(Continues on page 61)

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

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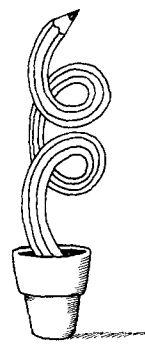
SIMON

(Continued from page 59)

he becomes visible to her, but they do have a brief but steamy time at Lake Tahoe, which John Seale shoots (as he does most of the movie) in misplaced bravura fashion. Warner Brothers has asked me not to divulge the ending, and so I can tell you only not to look for a conventionally happy one.

Los Angeles seems to be infested with angels, who often perch on road signs or rooftops and wear stylish, long-coated black outfits most likely from the Dolce & Gabbana boutique. One former angel, Nathaniel Messinger (Dennis Franz), actually finds bliss in marriage, parenthood, and gorging himself on high-cholesterol foods, but he is a roly-poly comic character. The main romance had to be a weeper, to conform to the mood of Dawn Steel, the co-producer, then dying of a tumor. Besides, that's what makes it art.



Dana Stevens's screenplay is a Hollywood travesty of Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire* (itself fairly silly), which it purports to adapt. The plotting is paltry, the dialogue psychobabble, but the scriptwriter has done her research. She knows that "angel" comes from the Greek *angelos*, meaning messenger, hence the name Messinger. An angelic colleague of Seth's, played by the black actor André Braugher, whose forte is tough guys, is called Cassiel, which was indeed the name of one of the angel princes (*sarim*), sometimes known as the angel of temperance. Here he seems to be the angel of political correctness among the angelic host, who convene at dawn on the beach at Malibu for what looks like some bizarre New Age celebration.

I shall not catalogue the film's absurdities, but shall state that it tries valiantly not to offend anyone, including unbelievers. Its religiosity is strictly nondenominational. God is never mentioned, and Heaven is merely "the other side" but clearly not a bad place to be "living—just not the way you think." Still, if the angels are as scurvy as Cage, as slobby as Franz, and as bald and bulging-eyed as Braugher, I'd rather find my way to the afterlife—if any—without their company.

■ Based on a novel by Patrick McCabe, Neil Jordan's ***The Butcher Boy*** is the story of how 12-year-old Francie Brady went to the dogs. His trumpet-player father, Benny, is an alcoholic; his mother, Annie, is mentally deranged. The time is that of the Cuban missile crisis: the good folk in Francie's small town in County Monaghan see Communists in the bushes and atomic cataclysm round the corner. Francie and his best friend, Joe, play at Indians and Indians (no cowboys for them), watch monster movies on TV, play insidious pranks on their proper, bespectacled chum Philip and on his mother, Mrs. Nugent, a rather grand and officious neighbor, Francie's particular nemesis.

Strange things happen: madness, death of dear ones, escapes to Dublin, acts of accelerating violence against Mrs. Nugent, confinement in sundry institutions (medical, mental, educational, correctional). Escalating crimes lead to a huge one as Francie stands the town on its head. There are visions of the Virgin Mary dispensing motherly advice, and of Armageddon with a world of dead pigs ("pig" is what Mrs. Nugent called Francie, who adopts it as his *nom de guerre*), and all sorts of twists and shocks. We are exposed to a gallery of Irish types of every stripe, from priests to bums, sufficient to make O'Casey's and Synge's Hibernian green greener with envy. It is all funny, bizarre, horrific, and often incomprehensible.

That's because the characters speak the Monaghanian lingo, which—when shouted, rattled off, or shrilled in childish treble—turns impenetrable. (After two viewings, I have caught about 65 per cent.) Admitting that he understood only half of what the protagonist said, David Denby concluded, "I find myself in an embarrassing position: I think this is a great movie, but I'm not sure." I suspect that the film, written by McCabe and Jordan, is too slippery for greatness: lightning shifts from farcical to sentimental, absurdist to tragic, mundane to apocalyptic, cannot be absolved from hocus-pocus.

But Jordan's direction is fluent, Elliot Goldenthal's score neatly juggles pop and pseudo-classical, locations are authentic and cannily captured by Adrian Biddle's camera. The acting crackles. Well-known actors such as Stephen Rea, Milo O'Shea, and Fiona Shaw are evenly matched with less well-known but no less talented ones, e.g., Sinead O'Connor, Rosaleen Linehan, Niall Buggy, Brendan Gleeson (superb as Father Bubbles), and those two terrific boys, classmates at a nearby school: Eamonn Owens (Francie) and Alan Boyle (Joe). Even when you cannot quite follow the language, the performances speak distinctly and attachingly. Still, what wouldn't I have given for an occasional subtitle! □

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ON THE RIGHT / Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

The Question of Judgment

NEW YORK, APRIL 21

The frugality of Al Gore is the cause of much jocundity, and who is surprised? A donation to charity of $353 against a background of $200,000 in salary plus perks including Air Force Two is certainly enough to energize the jokesters. Jay Leno asked his audience whether it had seen the episode of *ER* the night before. "It was really good. The doctors used the jaws of life to try to open Al Gore's wallet to get a charitable donation. It was heartwrenching." The counterpoint came quickly, contrasting contributions to charity by President Clinton. "Why did you think he offered to sleep with Paula Jones? If that's not charity, what is?"

It's a tough world, but if you get to cruise around it with eight hundred attendants and a Marine band at every airport, you have to put up with being pinned down—or will it now be suggested that gifts to charities, like extra-conjugal sex, are merely a matter of private concern? But pending this, how much you give to charity is right there under the public searchlight, and here is the problem that overshadows any concern over Mr. Gore's husbandry. It is the question of his utter, incredible political insensitivity.

An episode from the past. During the first campaign of General Eisenhower for President the potential scandal involving his running-mate's special fund for air fares from Washington to California brought on the famous Checkers speech. In that address, Mr. Nixon pleaded his poverty most poignantly and convincingly (but he would keep Checkers no matter what). At which point he performed the ecdysiast's final flourish: Here, he said. Here is—in effect—a copy of my income-tax return. Take it. Look at it.

In his hotel room, viewing the television performance, was candidate Dwight Eisenhower. The late Murray Kempton revealed that Eisenhower writhed in furious agony at what Nixon had done. By revealing his income-tax return, he had generated irresistible pressure on all the other candidates to do the same thing. Eisenhower paled at the thought of exposing his tax return—because his contributions to charity were on the order of 75 cents to the Red Cross.

Kempton coached his readers on what one might call West Point culture. When between-the-wars West Pointers graduated as second lieutenants, married, and brought up children, they had to make do on the starvation wages then being paid to the lower ranks in the military forces. In the time it took for them to go from being second lieutenants to being five-star generals, economic habits had set in concrete. So here was General Eisenhower, relatively affluent, facing a public scrutiny of exiguous contributions to charity.

People at the Presidency-seeking level are supposed to show more sense. When Ike ran, he never expected that anyone would see his tax returns. Gore, on the other hand, should have anticipated the exposure. Students of character are drawn not so much to his stinginess as to his failure to anticipate the political consequences of revealing it.

Criticism of the same order can be directed against Mr. Clinton. The thinking is along the following lines:

Paula Jones has filed suit. . . . The Supreme Court has said we must go to trial. . . . In preparation for trial, Paula's lawyers are going to examine every blind date I ever had. . . . They will also depose me—inevitable. . . . They'll ask me questions about Gennifer Flowers—inevitable. . . . It makes sense to settle. No problem raising $700,000. The "apology" they want? Not good, but we can work up something and spin with it. I'll get two or three bad days after that happens, but—it'll blow over, real fast.

A failure to analyze matters of political consequence involving one's own self-interest at the least suggests a potential weakness in the capacity to analyze successfully what is in the public interest. Al Gore owes 90 per cent of his high reputation to the sense of otherworldliness he emanates. It is easy and indeed fun to mock his immersion in wind, sand, and stars. But it is an immersion, in the Gore persona, that goes hand in hand with his immersion in the problems of—the Village. And always the village has needs. The American people are very good about this, giving about $150 billion a year to charitable causes. Those Americans who make $200,000 are more or less expected to do their share. And there are terribly obvious ways to communicate one's displeasure, when dealing with presidential candidates, with those who don't do their share. □

"I could not love thee half so well, loved I not baseball more."

Bloody Impasse on Guns?

NEW YORK, APRIL 14

The anti-gun-control people use a lot of arguments that are pretty fragile, but one or two that aren't. My least favorite argument in the entire armamentarium of polemics is Slippery Slope. That is the line used so extensively by the ACLU to protect its children—pornography, the extirpation of religion in any public situation, abortion rights. That line of reasoning tells you (to repeat an illustration frequently made) that if you disallow *Deep Throat*, the next thing you know, you'll be banning *Ulysses*. The gun lobbyists insist that if you ban the AK-47 you're going to end up banning the .22 rifle.

Now the National Rifle Association people are quite right to be suspicious of the designs of gun-controllers. It is absolutely true that there are people around who, if they had the power, would gladly disarm every American household. Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California admitted as much when commenting on the 1994 gun-control act: "If I could have gotten 51 votes in the Senate of the United States for an outright ban, picking up every one of them, Mr. and Mrs. America, turn them all in, I would have done it." And the *Washington Post*, supporting the 1994 ban on assault weapons, said pretty much the same thing. "No one should have any illusions about what was accomplished [by the ban]. Assault weapons play a part in only a small percentage of crime. [The ban] is mainly symbolic; its virtue will be if it turns out to be, as hoped, a stepping stone to broader gun control."

When President Clinton, reaching for a symbolic gesture after the slaughter of the

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children in Jonesboro, Arkansas, promulgated his ban on the importation of 58 different kinds of "assault weapons," that shot triggered thunderous volleys of the customary rhetoric on both sides. If you scrape away the fustian you can make out what both sides are saying. The ostensible argument is over the uselessness of an assault rifle for sports or hunting. The other side is full of statistics on the infrequency of the use of rifles, let alone assault rifles, in violent crime. But what they are really arguing about is the use of automatic rifles for killing people intentionally.

The *Tennessean*, for instance, commending the ban, states in its editorial, "Lawmakers should not be fooled. Guns that have no purpose but to kill people are not sporting weapons. No sportsman should support the importation of such guns."

The NRA answers that the armed services use fully automatic weapons (machine guns), while weapons of the kind that have been banned are semi-automatic. Then, "Throughout American history, most firearms . . . used by the Armed Forces were first used by civilian gun owners, including semi-automatic firearms." And then to the heart of the NRA's case: ". . . firearms that might be defined as 'military' would be protected by the Second Amendment, which guarantees that the people may be armed to protect life and liberty, not merely to engage in 'sport.'" The NRA cited the famous *Miller* decision of 1939, which, although it authorized the illegalization of sawed-off shotguns (shotguns having a barrel of less than 18 inches in length), acknowledged that "the Militia comprised all males physically capable of acting in concert for the common defense" and that "when called for service these men were expected to appear bearing arms supplied by themselves."

Something has to give here. Assault-gun collectors aren't arming to face an invasion of chipmunks. Should we care if a million or two assault rifles are ordered and oiled and occasionally fired on the range? The statistics, as acknowledged by the *Washington Post*, are pretty reassuring: The rifles aren't used, except in statistically negligible cases, for the commission of crime. Where they are used, more modest weapons would have served about as well.

We are left with a constitutional impasse. The Second Amendment can be made to sound as if it authorized any weapon. Common sense would seem to compel a different reading of it in a nuclear age. There is probably a Supreme Court test ahead of us, which will take on the *Miller* decision and restore constitutional literacy to a nation benumbed by the contradictions. □

Did You Pack Your Own Bags?

NEW YORK, APRIL 17

The warning is very ancient. It says that the true enemy of liberty is the diminution of the nervous reflex that spots creeping tyranny.

There are many examples, but none better, surely, than the idiotic ritual one is required to submit to at airports. Everyone is familiar with the routine, but it has become so habitual, we go through it without giving it any thought.

You present your bags and your ticket and are asked for "a photo ID." This is generally a driver's license or a passport. You pull the driver's license from your wallet, and the porter or gatekeeper pretends to look at it. All right, let's say he actually does look at it. Looks for what?

He looks for the name of "Adam Berlin," which is what you are ticketed as: "A. Berlin," Rochester to Atlanta. He nods.

Why is he nodding? Because he sees a picture which resembles you. What he has established is that a driver's license was at one point issued under the name "Adam Berlin," which is the same name that appears on a plane ticket presented by a man who looks like the picture on the driver's license. Next question: Name one late-twentieth-century saboteur, or for that matter one killer or mugger or rapist, who did not have a driver's license. Since you need no identification to buy a ticket, all that needs doing is to have a driver's license with a photographic likeness of you on it. If you want such a license under a name that is not your own, send five dollars to any bookstore and ask them to send you a copy of *The Children's Guide on How to Spy*.

But that is only the first thing, of course. Then come the questions:

Have you been separated from your suitcases since they were packed? (No.)

Did anyone other than you pack the suitcases? (No.)

Are you carrying inside the suitcases any packages for anyone which were not packed by you? (No.)

You feel embarrassed for the poor porters or ticket collectors who have to ask such rote questions when the chance of their uncovering foul play is much less than your chance of going down in flames on their airplane. If you are engaged in mischief inside your suitcases, you are not going to reveal this to the baggage porter.

The whole sequence is inherently—stupid; and humiliating, requiring as it does liturgical questions and liturgical responses by great big grown men and women who should resent it all. Every day there are 1.5 million people who fly. Times 365 makes 550 million per year. That comes to about half a billion times per year that somebody is asking silly questions demanding of somebody else meaningless responses.

During the days when people worried about security at points of entry into the country, a middle-aged French intellectual with practically no knowledge of English heard the immigration examiner ask, "Do you believe in overthrowing the United States Government by force or violence?" "Er," he replied, in agony exactly to understand the question, "preferably by force." That stopped the assembly line until it was explained to him that the purpose of the question hadn't been to ask him whether he *preferred* force to violence, rather to ask him simply to say, No, as a comprehensive answer.

If there is anybody out there who defends the baggage-question ritual he has not been heard from in any public forum. On what comes after the bags are checked, it is not widely divulged how much contraband is picked up by those X-ray machines that survey our briefcases and hatboxes and carry-on miscellany. Here it is a little easier to understand why the show nevertheless goes on. It goes on because who can say how many people are (gainfully?) employed to carry on those searches? If God were to grab a thunderbolt and aim it down on humankind forever extirpating any temptation to commit mayhem or plunder in the air—what would we do? I mean, there we'd be with, what, fifty thousand people serving no purpose whatever? . . . Could that be why nobody thinks to ask: Are they in fact serving any purpose? Do people really try to board planes when carrying hand grenades in their briefcases?

But the other fraternity, the people who ask you if you packed your own bags, have other important things to do. We can't know whether, if the airlines were relieved of the security questionnaire, there could be downsizing, and a reduction of the overhead of air travel. But shouldn't we worry over a creeping servility to bureaucratic make-work? □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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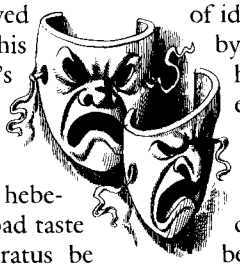
THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

FLORENCE KING

IF you think the sublime classical world of antiquity could not produce an American neurotic, guess again. In 356 B.C. the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, was set ablaze by a man named Erostratus who confessed that he did it because he wanted to be famous.

Boy, what he missed. America has long been the natural home of celebrity wannabes, but Erostratus would be in clover if he could see the liberating benefits they enjoy in the Nineties. Earlier on, when we merely democratized fame, we defended the right of any mouth-breather to rise from deserved obscurity on the strength of his God-given hebetude, but that's now considered limiting, even elitist. Fame, once democratic, is now socialistic.



From each according to his hebetude, to each according to his bad taste in friends. Why should Erostratus be the only one to go on CNN? If Erostratus is famous then so is his roommate, who lent him the arson car. So is his squeeze, who tells Larry King what the real Erostratus is really like. So is his 11th foster mother, who gives us the skinny on early-warning signs. And so is the manager of the convenience store where Erostratus bought out the entire stock of kerosene and Bics, whose name became a household word after he strolled through the aisles with Diane Sawyer, straightening cans of Spam while analyzing nervous gestures and problems with eye contact.

Our most disconnected fame socialist is Ellen DeGeneres's mother, who seems unaware that her raison d'être is no more. She first hit the tube during the publicity barrage for the coming-out episode of *Ellen*, making herself available for a spate of interviews about parenting an overt lesbian, handing out how-to tips, and presenting a picture of matter-of-fact acceptance and nonjudgmental serenity.

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

It may have been an act but it soon became sincere when Mrs. DeGeneres saw her chance to get in with the gay-rights crowd and began doing guest appearances at their functions. She's still at it—I surfed across her on a C-SPAN panel the other night—but there's a small problem: *Ellen* has been canceled and its star has made such a fool of herself that her career is on the skids. Yet Mrs. DeGeneres marches on, ignoring her aging daughter's bad ratings and worse press in her eagerness to make a name for herself.

This could get ironic. As a Louisianan she is subject to the Southern practice of identifying an obsessed woman by adding the word "lady" to her obsession. The equestrienne who's never out of the saddle is "the horse lady," the spit-and-polish housekeeper is "the ammonia lady," and Mrs. DeGeneres will be "the Ellen Who? lady."

Besides fame socialists we also have fame anarchists. William Ginsburg quickly achieved more or less conventional fame as Monica Lewinsky's lawyer, but then he wore out his welcome and had to start all over again. To regain the limelight he had come to crave, he made the most revolting public statement the country had ever heard: "I kissed that baby's inner thighs when she was six days old." Never mind the creepy pedophilic allusion, never mind the suggestive connection to the act that made his client famous; never mind the sneaking suspicion that lawyer and client just might be a textbook case of *folie à deux*. Never mind anything except the only thing that mattered: Ginsburg had made a comeback.

The world has always had show-offs but America has fame-seeking missiles. Michael Portnoy disrupted the Grammy Awards when he charged the stage, tore off his shirt, and broke into a wild dance, the words "Soy Bomb" painted in black letters on his bare chest. Nobody knows what it meant originally but it doesn't matter because Portnoy has turned pro and the words are now a verb: "to soybomb" means to disrupt for pay. "I soybombed the National Association of Record Manufacturers," said Portnoy, who is weighing other offers. "My work on the Grammys introduced me to the public. My injection of pandemonium on an organized agenda has made me a lasting entity."

Anonymous fame-seeker sounds oxymoronic but we have those too. They're the people who want to sink into a famous crowd. Taking part in a mass protest movement used to be a gesture toward the future; the media coverage may have been satisfying but idealistic selflessness was the primary reason for getting involved. Now the opposite is true: the past is what matters and the media are essential to its preservation.

Ask any participant in any mass happening on the Mall why he is there and he will say: "I want to be a part of history." The answer has a center-stage quality suggesting a lust for anonymity of a special kind: the anonymous fame-seeker actually wants to be the anonymous English soldier who whittled a cross for Joan of Arc at the stake; the anonymous spectator who picked up the shoe Richard II lost as he was carried aloft from his coronation; or the anonymous Spartan boy who let a fox gnaw out his entrails rather than show pain. This way, if Ted Koppel doesn't call, at least you can be a legend.

OUR lust for fame springs from a suffocating commitment to equality, a need for secular immortality to replace a lost belief in Heaven, and feminization, which gives equal importance to anything as long as it's personal: "What's the real Erostratus really like?" would be of no interest whatsoever in a civilized patriarchy.

Whatever the cause, I have a question. As more and more celebrity wannabes wander from green room to green room like mendicants with begging bowls, offering up their privacy and dignity for enough fame to keep body and soul together, what will happen to the concept of the Unknown Soldier? Think about that. We already have a Vietnam Memorial that looks like a telephone book. Now that we have discovered the unanonymous joys of DNA, when will we insist on knowing who is in that Tomb so we can track down their families and put them on television?

And worse, how many of them would jump at the chance? □

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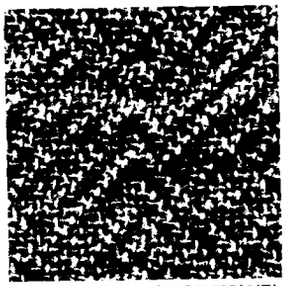
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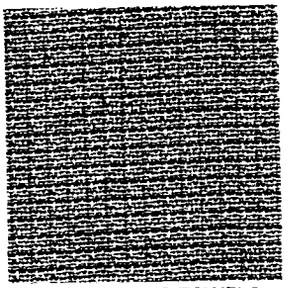
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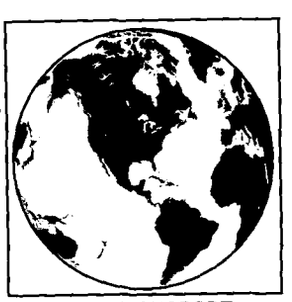
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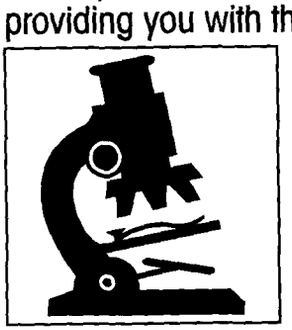
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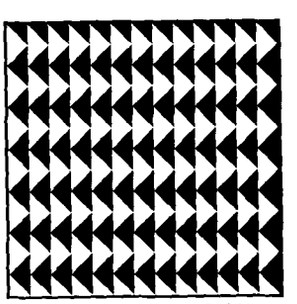
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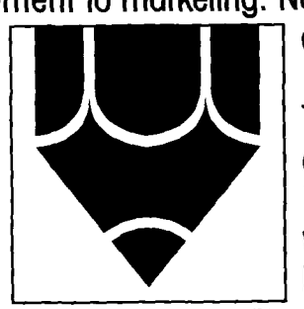
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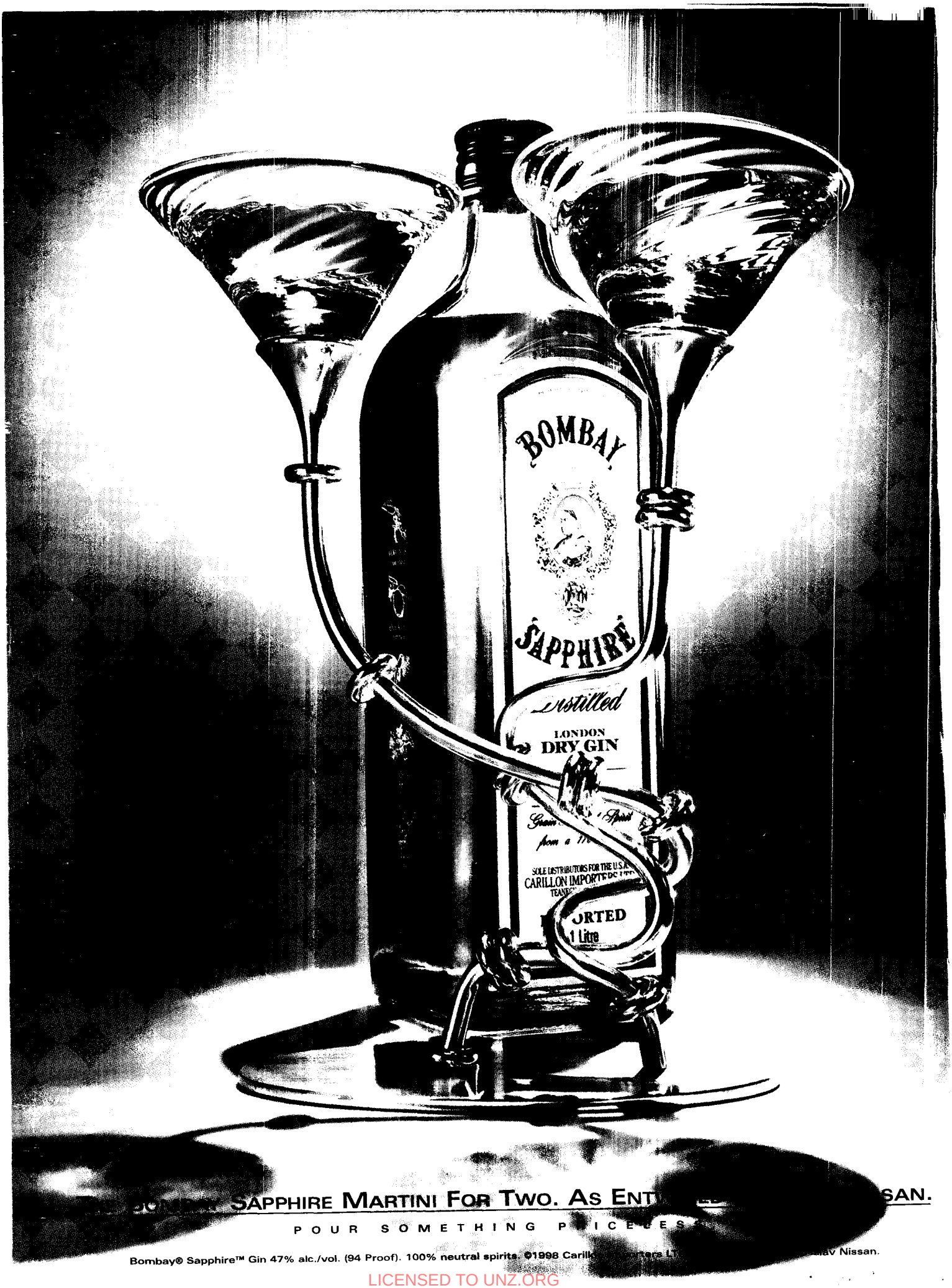

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